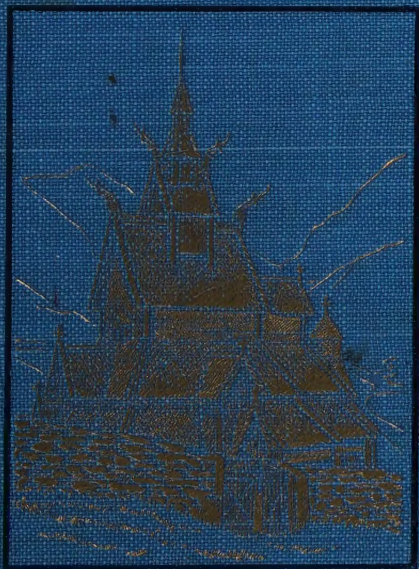


THINGS SEEN IN NORWAY



S. C. HAMMER



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THINGS SEEN IN NORWAY



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THE SUPERB NÆRØ VALLEY

Famous all over the world for its beauty and grandeur. The building in the foreground is the Stalheim Hotel.

THINGS SEEN IN NORWAY

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENERY OF THE COUNTRY, THE
PICTURESQUENESS OF ITS NUMBERLESS FJORDS, THE
MAJESTY OF ITS MOUNTAINS & WATERFALLS
WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE PEOPLE &
THEIR TOWNS, HOMES, CUSTOMS
LITERATURE & ART

BY

S. C. HAMMER, M.A.

University of Oslo

AUTHOR OF "WILLIAM THE SECOND, "LUDVIG
HOLBERG, AN OXFORD STUDENT"

ⓒ. ⓒ. ⓒ.

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Photo

LOGS FLOATING DOWN THE GLOMSEN RIVER

A typical scene on the largest of all the Norwegian rivers. The adjacent forests provide the material.

Fuener-Wilse

Things Seen in Norway

CHAPTER I

NORWAY AND THE NORWEGIANS

NORWAY is to a marked degree a country of striking contrasts. This fact constitutes the key to some of the most typical characteristics of the country and its inhabitants, and even a glance at the map is sufficient to convey a certain idea of it.

Far too narrow in proportion to her length, Norway, which forms the western part of the Scandinavian peninsula, covers, roundly, an area of 125,000 square miles, extending through more than thirteen degrees of latitude and twenty-six degrees of longitude, with distances unparalleled in any European country except Russia. From Lindesnes, the most southern point of Norway, to the North Cape it is about 1100 miles as the crow flies, a distance which corresponds approximately to that between Lindesnes and the Pyrenees. The fact that the most westerly point of Norway, at the mouth of the famous Sognefjord, lies on the same meridian as Amsterdam, and the most easterly point near Vardö, on the

Norway & the Norwegians

same meridian as Leningrad, is also instructive as to distances in Norway. Foreigners will do well to bear these points in mind when travelling in this country. They will not then be surprised to learn that the express steamers plying between Bergen and Kirkenes, the last town in Finmark, are unable to cover the distance in less than about eight days.

The coast of Norway holds a place of its own in the mind of the Norwegians. From time immemorial down to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the high road system was thoroughly reformed simultaneously with the construction of the first railway, the coast traffic was the backbone of the trade and commerce of the country, a condition still practically unchallenged in North Norway. The reason is obvious. Norway is on three sides hemmed in by the sea. To the south, to the west and the north the sea rolls against the coasts of this country, geologically one of the most ancient on record, which, after having passed through extraordinary upheavals in the infancy of the earth, finally, at the dawn of history, appeared as it appears to-day, at the first glance—a gigantic block of stone, rising in lofty massiveness above the sea. Yet it does not convey the idea of the dead inertness of a mere block. On the contrary, through numberless centuries the constructive genius of Nature has moulded the Norway block into a relief of wonderful charm and variety, displayed alike in mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers, and

Norway & the Norwegians

perhaps, above all, in the bewildering numbers of fjords which split up the coast in the most fantastic way, while off the coast a host of islands and islets—roughly estimated at some hundred and fifty thousand—lays a protective girdle practically all round the country, the open spaces of importance being easily counted on one's fingers. Owing to this extremely complicated coastline Norway is pre-eminently the land of the fjords, a fact which constitutes one of the greatest charms of Norway as a tourist country, and one of the greatest boons to the nation from a social and economic point of view.

So far as the interior is concerned, South Norway, which embraces about three-fourths of the total area of the country, is dominated by an imposing range of mountains, from ancient times known as Dovre and Langfjeldene (Long Mountains), the former constituting a natural barrier between South and North Norway, the latter between East and West Norway. Neither of these ranges forms distinctly defined mountain ranges; but notwithstanding this they are of paramount importance to the connected whole; in fact, the mountain peaks, the valleys, the watersheds, the lakes, the rivers of South Norway should all be seen in relation to the Dovre and the Long Mountains.

In North Norway, where the country all along is rather narrow, a mountain ridge bearing the name of Kjölen (the Keel) separates Norway from Sweden on a length extending all from

Norway & the Norwegians

the Trondhjem districts. Contrasted with the southern part of the country, which has the characteristic features of a plateau, the northern part of the country is considerably less elevated. A familiar comparison suggests itself. The rugged appearance of South Norway bears a striking resemblance to that of a capsized boat of gigantic dimensions, while attached to it like a fantastically twisted rope of enormous length North Norway extends through hundreds of miles along the North Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean.

It is the Dovre, the Long Mountains, and the Keel with their numerous ramifications which give Norway the character of a mountainous country in the true sense of the term. Yet she does not present the view of a mountainous plateau only from which imposing peaks rise to a considerable height; she very often also presents the beautiful scenery of an undulating series of ridges of a fairly uniform height crested with dark forests of pines and fir trees. Thus Norway is not only the land of the fjords and of the mountains; she is also the land of the forests—a fact which is less known among foreigners than the two former.

Yet all these characteristic features which add to the natural beauty of the country, and make it more attractive both from a foreign and native point of view, would lose their charm, were it not for the benignant influence of the Gulf Stream. On its passage along the coast of Norway the warmer current of this mighty

Norway & the Norwegians

stream gradually cools down, whereby an enormous amount of heat escapes from the surface of the sea into the air. At the same time, owing to the peculiar formation of the sea-bed along the coast—a sort of submarine ridge preventing, in fact, the ice-cold volumes of deep sea-water from entering the fjords—even the deeper part of the fjords have the benefit of the warm surface water.

The result of this happy arrangement on the part of nature does not only reveal itself in the fact that the West and North Norway fjords are never ice-bound in the winter; it also explains the phenomenon, that Norway, notwithstanding a geographical situation which by ordinary nature involves a climate like that of Greenland or Siberia, is favoured with climatic conditions appropriate to much more southerly latitudes. The vital importance of these conditions cannot be over-valued. They constitute the very key to the flora and the fauna of Norway as well as to her history, her culture, and her trade.

The vegetation of Norway may, in one word, be described as luxuriant, thanks alike to the unusual mildness of the climate and the great extent of the country which favours the spread of a varied vegetation to its different parts. Accordingly, in some parts of Norway we find an Arctic flora, in another part a Central European flora, and in still another part a flora whose home is Western Europe. But through all varieties of vegetation the fact remains that

Norway & the Norwegians

Norway is to a marked degree a woodland country, the forests covering about 22 per cent of the total area of the country, or approximately 28,000 square miles. About three-fourths of this area are covered by conifers—Scottish fir and Norwegian spruce—the rest being foliage trees, chiefly birch.

The fauna of Norway, like the flora, is composed of two different characteristics—one of a decidedly Arctic, the other of a more southerly origin. Among the most conspicuous animals of the Arctic fauna which extends far south in Norway are the bear, the wolf, the lynx, and the fox, which, with the exception of the latter, all are on the verge of extermination.

As far as the bear is concerned, this has long been considered a pity, and for a number of years eloquent articles written by hunters and other experts have appeared in the papers advocating absolute protection for this fine, naturally good-humoured animal, the pride, through centuries, of the Norwegian highland districts as well as the most popular animal of the folk-lore. Another remarkable animal, likewise of the Arctic type, is the beaver, which is justly famous for the consummate skill and technical ingenuity with which it constructs its elaborate two-roomed dwelling just below the surface of the water at the mouth of rivers. Thanks to a strict protection instituted at the eleventh hour a number of years ago this interesting animal has fortunately been saved from

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extinction, and the stock has now become so numerous that it had been found advisable to establish a non-closed season for a couple of weeks for the hunting of beavers.

Among the animals of South Norway which have immigrated in some distant prehistoric age, none is more conspicuous than the elk. It is the largest land mammal in Europe, and has from time immemorial had its home in the dense forests of East Norway. Owing to ruthless hunting the elk stock had, however, become almost exterminated when fortunately a generation ago a strict protection was instituted, and now the stock has again become so numerous as to admit the establishment of a brief non-closed season. Outside its favourite home in the forests of East Norway, there seems to be a rather numerous elk-stock in the counties immediately south and north of Trendhjem, and sporadically the elk appears also at Finmark, where it is supposed to have immigrated from Sweden. Another immigrant from Sweden belonging to the same family, is the roe deer, which after having crossed the frontier has spread over great parts of Norway and has become rather numerous since about the end of the last century.

Among the birds of Norway there is likewise a decidedly Arctic type, and a type of a more southern character related to that of Europe in general. The former type is chiefly represented by the ptarmigan, which occurs in various species all over the country, in the high mountains

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as well as in the forests ; the latter type includes among others the capercailzie and the black grouse, which have their favourite home in the East Norway forests, but have also spread to the Trondhjem districts and practically over the whole of North Norway. This part of the country is, however, as will easily be imagined, the home of the sea birds, and the farther north one gets the more varied become their species, the more bewildering their hosts.

No less interesting than the fauna of the mountains and the forests is the fauna of the lakes and the rivers. Owing to the special formation of the country the rivers of Norway which, by the way, are rather numerous, affords an excellent playground for such quick and vigorous fishes as the salmon and the sea trout. The salmon always ready to challenge the power of the rapids and waterfalls, which so often interrupt the rivers of this country, regularly goes up no less than some two hundred rivers—from the Swedish frontier in the south right up to the Finnish frontier in the north. The sea trout occurs in a number of sea-trout rivers, which are held in high esteem by anglers, even though they can hardly be compared with the salmon rivers, as far as sport is concerned.

It might be tempting to detail on this subject, the more so as the British angler was the pioneer angler in Norway, the first to discover the sport to be obtained in the Norwegian rivers more than a century ago ; but owing to the limited scope

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of the present volume we will restrict ourselves to the reference to a pamphlet published in English by the National Association for the Promotion of Travel in Norway, entitled, *Angling in Norway*, which contains an alphabetical list of one hundred salmon rivers in this country, together with a number of other details bearing upon salmon and trout fishing. Besides the salmon and the trout, the char is the most conspicuous fresh-water fish in Norway belonging to the Arctic family, while among species of a Central and Eastern European origin special mention may be made of a number of representatives of the carp family.

In the open sea we find the same difference as in the lakes and the rivers between species of fish of a more arctic type and those of a more southern origin. To the former belong primarily the herring and the cod, the pivot of the famous great fisheries on which the population of West and North Norway is chiefly dependent; the latter species has a fine representative in the mackerel, a distinguished foreign southern visitor to South Norway, who gets away in the winter and only returns in the spring. No wonder that the first catch of mackerel is reported in the papers along with the appearance of the first flower and the arrival of the first birds of passage.

These scattered details on the flora and fauna of Norway may appropriately be summed up by a reference to the double descent of the Norwegians themselves from a race of "short-

Norway & the Norwegians

skulls" and a race of "long-skulls," of which the latter is the younger and the one which has prevailed. We are aware that these anthropological distinctions are of inferior interest to tourists in general, but in the present case they help to explain the fact that in this country with a population broadly consisting of tall, light-complexioned, fair-haired, and blue-eyed individuals, one may come across entire districts—practically restricted to West Norway—with a markedly dark-complexioned, black-haired, and brown-eyed population of medium height. Besides these two types of Norwegians proper there are in Norway two minor races of Mongolian origin, the Lapps and the Quains, with whom we propose to deal in a later chapter.

The Norwegians very early realized how remote their country was from the rest of the world, and this is perhaps the chief reason why they took a fancy to the sea centuries before they became famous as vikings. Yet this remoteness from the main roads of European civilization constitutes only one of the drawbacks with which the country has had to contend for more than a thousand years; the other was the scarcity of the population, scattered as it was over an enormous territory full of mighty obstacles, which have not been removed even yet, notwithstanding all the facilities of modern communications within the last forty or fifty years.

Norway is and will ever be situated on the outskirts of civilization, unable to transmit any

Norway & the Norwegians

further the current of culture of the South, for the very natural reason that she is herself the most northerly country in Europe, with nothing beyond her but the polar regions and their scattered population of Eskimos and other nomadic tribes. That is why all the efforts of the Norwegians, through more than a century of self-government, have been centred in conquering their own country by throwing open to the blessings of modern intercourse the lonely valleys and the remote fjord districts, the population of which was for centuries condemned to a life of isolation and monotony. Add to this the fact that Norway is the most sparsely populated country in Europe, with an average of only twenty-one persons to the square mile, and that the struggle for life is carried on under very hard conditions, and no one will wonder that in the course of centuries all this has stamped the character of the Norwegians, and that it is reflected to-day in their thought and action.

The Norwegians have often been described as a "winter nation," and there is, indeed, a close affinity between the stern aspects of the external nature of Norway and the grave, somewhat melancholic view of life which constitutes one of the chief characteristics of the rural population in the lonely valleys and along the narrow fjords. Yet, too much importance should not be attached to it. The mighty environments, instead of working overwhelmingly on the spirit and temper of man, have challenged him to opposition, the

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result being a struggle between man and nature in which the conquering genius of the former has ultimately prevailed. The consciousness of such a victory naturally induces a feeling of manly satisfaction and of cheerful confidence, and it is, therefore, not by chance that in some of the wildest and most inaccessible districts in West and North Norway one will find a population whose mind and temper have remarkable affinities, not to the stern winter night of Norway, as might have been expected, but, on the contrary, to her bright summer day with all its warmth and fragrance.

The exceedingly long winter and the comparatively brief summer are, however, climatic facts from the effects of which the Norwegian nation is unable to disengage itself, although even here the general advance in all fields of life is modifying the former conditions to a not inconsiderable extent. For centuries the Norwegians had to work hard in the summer, in order to get everything ready before the setting in of the winter, which, owing to its severity, practically prevented them from doing anything. As a consequence, the nation in the course of time developed a certain disinclination for regular work; it preferred instead to work by fits and starts, to transform, as it were, the energy and abilities, paralysed by the winter, into a burst of activity in the summer.

This irregularity has been fostered to no small extent by the decidedly seasonal character of

Norway & the Norwegians

the trades which in the course of centuries have presented themselves as natural to the Norwegians. Unlike all other people in Europe this nation had to find its living outside the field of agriculture, and up to the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the age of mechanical industry set in, the most typical trades of Norway were fishing, shipping, and timber-floating. The qualities they engendered were primarily courage, presence of mind, mental and physical perseverance, and in addition a perfect technical mastery over the crafts used in the respective trades. Accordingly, the struggle for existence of the Norwegians had always a touch of sport or adventure about it which appealed to man, and attracted him to whatever was extraordinary around him.

The passion of the Norwegians for all sorts of sport, their roving nature which make them turn up in the most distant places tell the same thing. All this is the natural outcome of the spirit of independence and energy which made the ancient history of Norway one of striking personalities and remarkable achievements, and which has revealed itself so splendidly during the last hundred years. On the other hand, this firm belief in the future of Norway and the richness of her natural resources has for a century been counteracted by a settled determination not to indulge too freely in "vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself."

It is the struggle between these two concep-

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tions of Norway and her destinies which has moulded modern Norway, and made her history, within the last hundred years so intensely dramatic, while at the same time it has engendered a faction spirit, apparently alien to the idea of national unity, and a somewhat excessive delight in fighting for fighting's sake.

Yet this contentiousness and lust of battle are not without their redeeming feature. At the bottom of the Norwegian mind, as at the bottom of Norwegian history, there is a solid stock of common sense and good humour which enable men to forget their wounds when the fight is over and to hold out the hand of reconciliation. These features reveal themselves in a number of ways in everyday life, and an intelligent foreigner anxious to study Norway somewhat closely will not fail to perceive them without long quest.

CHAPTER II

PAST AND PRESENT

THE history of Norway, as we are able to survey it from our present vantage ground, covers a period approaching 1100 years, reckoning from the famous battle in the Hafrsfjord (West Norway) in A.D. 872, when the country was officially united into one kingdom by the famous King Harald Hairfair, whose line continued to reign in Norway for nearly 450 years.

This period, generally called the Saga (prose narrative) period, was in many respects a remarkably brilliant time. During these centuries the vitality and genius of the Norwegian nation was displayed to the world in a striking way, first through the Viking expeditions, which made Norway's name resound over Europe, and later through more peaceful enterprises, among which may be mentioned such important geographical achievements as the discovery of Greenland and the North American Continent as far down as Boston.

The most conspicuous result of the Viking expeditions, from a social and cultural point of view, was, however, the introduction in Norway of Christianity—a work which was completed by King Olav Haraldsson (1015–1030), who

Past & Present

organized the Norwegian Church with the assistance of an Anglo-Saxon Bishop by the name of Grimkell. In the year 1030 King Olav fell in the famous battle of Stiklestad, not far from Trondhjem, overthrown by the Norwegian peasant chieftains and their followers, who had come from all parts of the country to this last decisive fight for their ancient gods. But the slain king soon proved to be the real victor. The peasants withdrew from the battlefield and its vicinity without delay, and returned to their homes filled with grief and remorse at their unhappy deed, while King Olav himself rose from the dead, as it were, and appeared as Saint Olav, the martyr king of Norway, to whom all offered their prayers and their gifts, even in the tempestuous age of the Civil Wars (1130–1240)—“the ever-ruling King of Norway,” as he has justly been called.

The immediate result of the introduction of Christianity in Norway, as already mentioned, the organization of the Church on what may briefly be called Anglo-Saxon lines—a fact which exercised a remarkable influence on the whole of the saga period. As another result may be mentioned the erection of a great number of monasteries and churches in Norway, as well as several cathedrals, among which the Cathedral of Saint Olav in Trondhjem stands out prominently as a fine example of mediæval architecture. Add to this the remarkable town laws of ancient Norway, with their many striking resemblances



Photo

Mittel

A HARDANGER GIRL AND MATRON

Their costumes, which are of the most well-known type in Norway, are chiefly black, with brightly coloured braids and embroideries. Their waist-belts and other parts of their dresses are gaily ornamented with beads.

Past & Present

to similar laws in England and France, and, above all, the exceedingly rich literature, and it will easily be understood why at the present date, when knowledge of the past is more intimate than ever, the Saga period holds such an important place in the mind of the Norwegian nation.

The extraordinary development of Norway in the Saga period came to an abrupt end in 1319 simultaneously with the extinction of the Royal House of Haarfagre, and from that year up to 1814, without ever ceasing to exist as an independent kingdom, Norway drifted into union, first with Sweden (1319), subsequently with Sweden and Denmark (1397), and, finally (1450), with Denmark—a connection which lasted without interruption for 364 years. From a European point of view these five hundred years of the history of Norway—generally called “the dark centuries”—have always been considered remarkably dull and devoid of interest; but it is easy to see on a closer examination that this period is as important to the development of the Norwegian nation as the Saga period, and that accordingly, without a general knowledge of both epochs it is impossible to trace the factors which have moulded Contemporary Norway and imbued the nation with its present views.

The decline of Norway in the fourteenth century is primarily due to the extinction of the Royal House of Haarfagre, preceded by the extermination of the national aristocracy during the Civil Wars, the result being that the Nor-

Past & Present

wegian nation which, broadly speaking, was a nation of peasants was left without leaders in an age when nobility held a strong position in Sweden and Denmark. The miseries brought about by the Black Death (1349), and the inferiority of the Norwegian merchant vessels in the competition with the larger vessels belonging to the German Hanseatic League, added to the decay until, by 1500, the nation seemed to find itself in a state of mental lethargy. But in the midst of all gloom and isolation the traditions of the former splendour of Norway continued to live in a wonderful folk-lore, the treasures of which only began to be revealed towards the middle of the nineteenth century.

During the sixteenth century there was the first indication of the coming day, initiated by the literary revival which followed the introduction (1536) of the Lutheran Reformation and the simultaneous decline and dissolution of the Hanseatic League, whereby Norway eventually escaped from the grip of the Germans. The subsequent rise and development of the Norwegian timber trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which re-established the ancient connections between Norway and Western Europe, added to the strength of the national evolution, and eventually brought about the dissolution of the Union between Denmark and Norway in 1814 and the subsequent establishment of Norway as an independent kingdom on the basis of the Constitution of May 17, 1814. Thereby the



Photo

Wilse

A FISHERMAN'S HOME

These little houses, with their low roofs overgrown with vegetation and secured against the weather with large stones, are typical of the Søndmøre coast, which is on the west, and to the north of Bergen.

Past & Present

Norwegians again took their stand among the free nations of the world.

In the autumn of 1814 Norway, through the short-sighted policy of the Great Powers of Europe, was forced into the Union with Sweden, exhausted as she was chiefly owing to the protracted war (1807-1814) with England. Her population, which at that juncture only numbered 900,000, was impoverished, her trades disorganized, and her former markets closed, and as a consequence no means were available for reconstructive purposes. For a number of years the general position of Norway may, therefore, be described as a rather gloomy one, and, in fact, a real improvement set in only during the thirties, when a generation of young men came to the front who had got their whole training in Norway, and who were anxious to serve her to the best of their ability.

Very soon this revival which, at the outset, was of an essentially political and cultural character, was followed by a marked improvement of the economic conditions. This movement continued on a satisfactory scale during the forties, and culminated in the first half of the fifties, chiefly under the influence of the English Free Trade movement, which proved a perfect blessing to Norway.

Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, commerce, and navigation prospered as never before, and added to the wealth of the nation. New towns were founded, and those in existence were improved

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and enlarged. A number of banks, insurance companies, shipping firms, and general business undertakings, which to-day are among the best known within the business community of the country, date from this period, which also coincides with the foundation of mechanical industry in Norway. At the same time the construction of railways, telegraphs, canals, lighthouses, and high roads, as well as the constantly expanding steamship traffic, got a mighty impetus.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary growth in practically all fields of human activity, the Norwegian nation, towards the end of the fifties, did not feel quite at its ease. The reason is obvious. The national democracy established by the Constitution of 1814 still only existed in theory ; the juxtaposition with Sweden, on the basis of which Norway had reluctantly entered the Union, remained a dead letter. Indeed, the history of Norway during the second half of the nineteenth century should be surveyed in the light of these two facts. The former stamps the period from 1871 to 1884, when it was finally settled through the introduction of a parliamentary system of government ; the latter ultimately (1905) resulted in the dissolution of the Union with Sweden after protracted struggles which taxed the time of the nation to a disproportionate degree.

Next to 1814 there is no more important period in the history of Modern Norway than 1905. It not only marks the end of the purely constitu-

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tional conflicts, but the inauguration of an entirely new era in the life of the nation. For the first time since 1319 Norway is again a sovereign kingdom in the European sense of the word, while at the same time Norwegian politics have been mixed up with economic and social problems to an extent as never before. It need hardly be added that this development has been accompanied by the same economic and social phenomena as in all other industrial states of Europe, and that finally the whole situation has been further aggravated through the consequences of the Great War.

At the same time the general conditions of the nation have changed enormously.

The mighty waterfalls of Norway which, through thousands of years, emptied their volumes of water unused into the sea have, especially since 1900, been harnessed on a constantly increasing scale, not only for industrial but also for domestic purposes. Thanks to the construction of an increasing number of municipal plants—a development which has been favoured by a consistent policy on the part of the State Authorities—electric lighting has found its way to the remotest fjord and valley districts of the country, and year by year electric power is making new conquests along with the telephone and the motor-boats which perhaps more than anything else have contributed to shorten distance along this extensive coast with its innumerable fjords.

By land the roads have been conquered by

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taxicabs, the result being among other things that in the tourist districts even the typically national vehicle, known as *kariol*—always extremely popular with British tourists—is gradually being ousted from favour. It is a little gig just large enough for one person and resting between two light wheels upon two cross-bars of wood (or iron), mortised in the shafts. By sea boats of all kinds have been supplied with motors, an innovation of enormous importance to the population all along the coast as well as on the rivers and on the lakes. In short, everywhere silence and leisure have had to give way to bustle and hurry. Fortunately this does not mean that the wonderful natural beauties of Norway are in danger of losing their fascination over the minds of the Norwegians; it may rather be said that they never appealed to them more strongly. This also explains the fact that of late there has been a reaction in favour of the past and of reviving, among other things, the use of national costumes and old folk-dances.

“Know thy country—its nature and its history” is the motto of the younger generation. Foreigners should recognize its value as it explains, in fact, some of the most characteristic aspects of Norway to-day.

CHAPTER III

A PEEP INTO CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

IT follows as a matter of course that in a country like Norway, where the inhabitants for hundreds of years have scattered over an extremely large area, divided by natural barriers into more or less secluded districts, a number of local customs and manners should quite naturally have established themselves. Within the last two generations the chief characteristics of these local customs have, to a certain extent, become a thing of the past, but can be studied at the Folk Museum at the Bygdøy, at the Sandvig Collections, and similar places to which we have already made reference. Writing about Customs and Manners in Norway we shall, therefore, have to eliminate those particular features of an essentially local character, and deal only with those which can be observed everywhere in the country—in towns as well as in the rural districts.

Foreign visitors often arrive in this country with the misconception that houses mostly are built of wood. Such used to be the case in former days, all over Norway, and is still the case in the rural districts; but owing to the frequent fires which, within the last hundred years have

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visited most of the Norwegian towns, it has been found necessary to supply the Building Act with a "compulsory brick building clause," which is now in force in all towns. The type of houses most usual in the rural districts or in the minor towns is that built for one or two families, but it need hardly be said that housing conditions vary considerably in different parts of the country. This perhaps is especially true so far as wooden houses are concerned, the fishing population on the west coast, for instance, where timber is expensive, being not nearly so adequately housed as the farming population of East Norway, where the large forests provide a sufficient and cheap supply of building material. In the towns, streets with wooden houses, therefore, generally mean quarters which have not been destroyed by fire within the last generation or two. The size of the brick houses quite naturally grows with the size of the towns; as a consequence in the larger towns large buildings (mostly four floors) predominate, especially at Oslo, where approximately 60 per cent are blocks of flats accommodating a considerable number of families.

The chief entrance of an ordinary Oslo house is through a gateway, which leads to an inner yard, from which the house can be entered, and from which stairs lead to the top of the house. This entrance is in a number of cases the "kitchen entrance" of the families whose flats face the street, and the "main entrance" of the families who only have flats facing the yard; but this is

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not necessarily the case. In a number of cases flats facing the street are entered by way of the kitchen entrance. The families who have their flats on the various floors facing the street generally turn upstairs to the right or to the left in the middle of the gateway.

There is no *conciérge*, as in France, so that anyone can enter the house, practically unnoticed; but there is always a porter who lives in one of the "kitchen entrance" flats whose duty it is to supervise the house generally, and to him complaints can be made. He has a number of duties, one of which is to see that the gate is closed at ten o'clock in winter and at eleven in the summer. But it is not his duty to open the gate, as all the families living in the house have their private keys, and if a man should have forgotten his key he can ring the bell leading from the street direct to his floor without troubling the porter. On the other hand, the porter has to open the gate very early in the morning so as to admit a free entrance to the "newspaper-messengers," mostly women, assisted by one or two of their children, who drop their papers outside the *entrée* of their respective subscribers. This service which takes place on all weekdays—Sunday distribution of newspapers being prohibited a number of years ago—works remarkably well; but sometimes, of course, it may happen that a subscriber does not get his morning paper, and he then does not hesitate to phone to the Distribution Office of his paper and

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complain that it has not been delivered that morning. Most of the leading journals of Oslo are morning papers, but those in the provinces are evening editions and are the more general.

So far as telephones are concerned, they are numerous and very accessible. Customers who enter a shop for the first time may ask to "borrow the telephone," and permission is readily given in the minor towns as a rule free of charge; at Oslo, where the telephone is now worked on the automatic system, at a charge of less than a penny.

The Norwegian meaning of the French word *entrée*, which has been introduced into the language in the form of *entrée*, implies the corridor or passage which separates the open landings which marks the various floors of the house from the interior parts of the house in question. Suppose we enter a Norwegian house and turn up the main entrance in the middle of the gateway. In a minute we find ourselves outside the *entrée* doors of the families living in the first floor of the house; if we proceed further we shall find similar *entrée* doors all the way to the top of the house, either arranged side by side, or just opposite to each other. They are generally provided with non-transparent panes and protected from behind by curtains so as to be proof against curiosity. The *entrée* door to which the master and the mistress have their private key is always closed. People who have *entrée* doors side by side or just opposite to one another may practically remain strangers

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to one another all through life, though, of course, the system also admits of intimacy.

Inside the *entré* door is an ordinary entrance hall, which may be narrow or wide according to circumstances ; but which, as a rule, is somewhat dark, and therefore lit by electric light in the day as well as in the evening. The *entré* is supplied with a number of pegs for outer things which are left here. The rooms of the flat are on both sides of the *entré*, generally so arranged that the different rooms in which people spend the day face the street, whereas the bed chambers face the yard. Those inhabiting flats are generally of a class in receipt of a fairly good annual income ; to do more than generalize is, of course, impossible, as quite naturally all depends on the social and educational standard of the family in question ; but, as a rule, books, pictures, etchings, flowers, and a piano occupy a conspicuous place. Family portraits of members of some generations past are also very much appreciated. As an outward decoration the national flag has a very conspicuous place amongst all ranks of society.

A very large number of houses in all the towns are provided with a flagstaff, often with several mostly rigged out from the balconies, there being as a rule, one balcony flat on each floor. In the country there will be a flagstaff before nearly every house of any pretension. This affection for the flag, which, by the way, is red with a blue cross trimmed with white, is primarily due to

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the struggle for the liberation of the flag during the nineteenth century, which can be fully understood only by the older generation who witnessed the last phase of it. The flag is hoisted on private and public occasions of importance ; above all, on Constitution Day. In a number of the minor towns along the coast the old seaman custom is still to fly all flags at half-mast on Good Friday, and at full mast on Easter Sunday.

Hospitality has always been an outstanding quality of the Norwegians, and numerous foreigners, including very many English, have paid their tribute to it. Accordingly it is not difficult for an educated foreigner to get the *entré* to a Norwegian family ; if he finds himself in a minor town he may even be inclined to regard himself as a person of some importance from the amount of kindness bestowed upon him. Nevertheless, if he is of an observant nature, he will certainly see how much and in what respects customs and manners in Norway differ from those in England or on the Continent.

First of all our British friend is likely to be struck by the democratic ways and habits of the Norwegians. The democratic feeling is the historical product of a social and economic evolution which has been exceedingly unfavourable to the development of a special nobility. It died out in the sixteenth century, and the establishment of an official nobility in the latter half of the seventeenth century only resulted in the creation of two counts and one baron. In 1821,

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in conformity with the Constitution of 1814, which provides that "no earldoms, baronies, entailed estates, or heirlooms may be created in the future"; nobility was abolished, and the last of the barons has accordingly passed away years and years ago.

Even the form of politeness implied by the English "Mr.," for which the Norwegian language has the "Herr," is felt as unnatural in Norway in daily conversation. It is used on letters and in public debates, and occasionally in conversations when people meet for the first time. But it is dropped at the earliest opportunity, it being considered most natural and convenient to address people by the surnames without any title. Even the maid servant, who, by the way, is mostly spoken of as "house assistance," may address or mention the master of the house straight off by his surname without being considered impolite at all.

People in Norway are generally early risers partly owing to the fact that children have to be at school at eight or half-past, as in the larger towns a number of them have a long way to cover, by train or by steamer, the latter being chiefly the case in the summer, when people live on the fjord. By the same time most of the shops open. At nine a number of offices open their doors, with the exception of banks and larger offices. Government departments open at nine, at which time ministers may turn up in order to set a good example to their staff; but,

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as a rule, a man who wants to see a minister should wait until ten before calling. Appointments are made over the telephone, and, in fact, nothing is easier than to get access to a Norwegian minister, the Premier included. At Oslo general office work goes on till four o'clock in the afternoon, while Government offices close at three. In most other towns the office hours are from 9 to 1 and from 4 to 7.

As boarding schools were and still are practically unknown in Norway, parents and children remain together during the whole school age. There is, of course, a compulsory obligation to attend school, which in the country and most of the minor towns is a mixed school for boys and girls while in larger towns boys and girls, as a rule, are taught separately. As a consequence boys and girls meet freely from an early age, and many of these child-acquaintances develop in the course of years to feelings of a lasting character, leading to engagements and marriages.

Parents and children meet at the breakfast-table. The Norwegian breakfast is not, as a rule, so substantial as the English breakfast, and as a special feature may be mentioned that bacon is an exception rather than a rule; but thanks to a fair supply of bread and butter and a cup or two of coffee it is a very nourishing meal after all. At dinner-time the family meet again, mostly at half-past two in the minor towns, and at three or half-past three in the larger towns. At Oslo a number of people also dine between 4



Photos

Wilse

A FAVOURITE DOMESTIC ANIMAL

A common sight in West Norway.

WAITING FOR A JOB

Where you don't meet with motors, which is now seldom, you will find the "Skyss" Boy. The little gig beside him is called a "Stolkjærre."

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and 6 p.m. and even later. Dinner is considered the most important meal of the day, and, as a consequence, it is a very substantial one, consisting, as a rule, of two dishes, soup and meat or soup and fish, and on Sundays frequently dessert.

Dinner hours generally extend to five, the consequence being that between three and five in the afternoon there are comparatively few people about, and that shops as well as streets present a rather dull appearance. After dinner the father and the mother of the family will generally take a nap, from which they may occasionally be roused by the telephone; but, as a rule, telephone calls to private houses are rare at this time of the day, as people respect the dinner hours of one another, knowing that no one likes to be roused when taking a nap. After the nap and a cup of coffee work is resumed until seven when most shops are closed. The last meal in the day, generally consisting of bread and butter and tea, is served at between eight and half-past in the evening. In the summer people, as a rule, go out for a walk after the evening meal, or they go out in a boat on the fjord, or on a lake or a river, if they are living in an inland town. In the autumn and winter the evenings are, of course, spent indoors. One of the chief mental recreations, at this time of the year, is reading, and it is therefore not by chance that practically all books which come within the category of good class literature appears between October and Christmas.

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It is, of course, a matter of great importance that children should behave well, and good behaviour at table is, of course, one of the first things inculcated upon the children's mind. As in England, children are taught not to put their knives into their mouths, but, unlike English children, they are told to "thank for the meal." After breakfast they will usually say, "thank you for the coffee"; after dinner and supper, "thank you for the meal." The reply of the father or the mother who also use the same term mutually on leaving the table is *velbekomme* ("may good digestion wait on appetite"). At private parties it is the privilege of the gentleman who is the partner of the mistress of the house to "thank for meal"; at public dinners, when the king may be present, it is the privilege of His Majesty to perform this act.

This form of politeness is closely connected with another phase of politeness, unknown outside the frontiers of the northern countries. On leaving a party politeness requires that people shall say, "*tak for iafte*" ("thank you for this evening"), and the first time they meet their hosts or some of their friends from the party people have to say, "*tak for sist*," an ancient form of politeness which means, "thanks for the pleasure I had from your company the last time we met." It is a complimentary form of recognition, which it is considered impolite to neglect; and if it should be neglected owing to the frailty of human recollection an apology has to be made



Photo

Wilse

SETESDAL PEASANTS IN THEIR LOCAL COSTUME

They are seated around one of the raised store-houses of the village. Here provisions for the winter are kept secure against the attacks of rats, etc.

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on the earliest opportunity. On the other hand, there is no expression in the language covering the English, "how do you do?" People mostly say *godmorgen* (good morning), a word often pronounced so quickly that it sounds more like an interjection than a phrase of politeness; another peculiarity of this expression is that it is more and more being used at any time of the day, even late at night.

The various family events which may happen are quite naturally associated with a number of customs, many of which are of a very old standing. As in Scotland, in former days, expensive weddings and funerals were common among the country people in Norway, and the festivities might last for several days. The busy life of the present generation does not admit of such time-wasting entertainments, and the former customs in connection with events like these have, therefore, been very much restricted. Nevertheless, local differences, in a country of such vast distances as Norway, will always make such events appear in a somewhat different light, whether they take place in the country or in a town, or whether the town in question is a small town or a larger one. In the former case, it depends, of course, upon the importance of the family within which the event takes place. All over the place people are flying their flag at full mast or at half-mast, according to the circumstances, and the whole town is familiar with all details in connection with the event.

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In towns weddings generally take place at four or five o'clock in the afternoon. Gentlemen come in evening dress, ladies in full dress. By that time a number of vehicles, mostly carriages drawn by a pair of horses drive up before the main door of the church where the wedding is to take place. There is free admittance to outsiders, so that, especially in minor or middle-large towns, a greater part of the church is full of spectators, mostly female, with the exception of the upper part which is reserved for the wedding guests.

The bride, who is in white with a veil fastened to her hair, crowned by a wreath of myrtle and floating down her back, is given away by her father or her nearest male relative. They drive up last of all to the entrance of the church, on entering the organ will peal forth Mendelssohn's famous Wedding March, while the whole congregation rises and remains standing until the bride, conducted by her relative and attended by her bride's maid, stops before the altar rail. Here she is joined by the bridegroom, who up to that moment has been sitting by himself near the altar waiting for the bride, after which the wedding guests and the spectators resume their seats. After the ceremony, which is performed by the vicar, the newly married couple leaves the church, driving away first of all either to the home of the bride, or to a club or an hotel, where the wedding dinner has been arranged.

During the dinner a number of speeches will be delivered, the first by the father or the nearest

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male relative of the bride, who, after having dwelt on the importance of the event and assured the bride of the high place she holds in the affection of her dear ones, winds up by proposing the toast of the newly married couple. Next comes the bridegroom, who has to "thank for the bride" in a speech in which he is expected to outline briefly the history of his first acquaintance with the bride and his subsequent courtship—a speech which may turn out a fine mixture of humour and seriousness, if the bridegroom happens to be a good speaker. He will wind up by the assurance to the bride's parents or relatives that he will always consider it his duty to make the bride as happy as ever he can. It need hardly be said that the various speeches are summed up by a toast—for the newly married couple, the bride, the bride's maids (always proposed by the bridegroom), parents, and relatives on both sides, the bridegroom (always proposed by his nearest friend), etc. The Norwegian term for "toast" is *skaal* (pron. scawl), which also means "your health." It is the standard expression when people raise their glasses mutually and when they drink to the health of some third person present or absent or some institution. It is, in fact, the first word most foreigners learn on a visit to Norway, and we have often heard Englishmen and Frenchmen declare that they find it extremely convenient, and that it ought to be adopted into their own language. A *skaal* is mostly accompanied by what is popularly called

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a “ 3×3 hurrah,” which is delivered in three tempos, each consisting of three hurrahs, with a preciseness which never fails to evoke the admiration of foreigners on hearing it for the first time.

This general description of a Norwegian wedding amongst the educated classes only holds good if the bride is a young girl. If the bride is a widow or a divorced lady the wedding quite naturally takes place with considerably less display of ceremonies. In such cases the wedding in a number of cases takes place either in the church at a specially arranged hour, or at the vicar's office, for every vicar has a sort of office (*kontor*) in his house, where registration of such events as weddings, funerals, etc., is made for State purposes. A civil marriage may be contracted at the burgomaster's office, if especially desired; but, as a whole, civil marriages are still comparatively rare in Norway.

The outer symbol of a marriage amongst all classes is a plain golden ring, exactly of the same pattern for men and women. The rings are exchanged on the day on which the engagement is “made public,” which usually takes place through the medium of the papers. It seems corroborated by years of experience that for some reason or another Christmas and Easter holidays are the favourite seasons in Norway for engagements, but there is no fixed rule of course; nor is there any fixed rule as to the wearing of rings, a growing number of people among the upper classes being without a ring.

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The general reader of a newspaper is informed through its columns of the greater number of "engagements" and "weddings," which may be supposed to be of any interest to him. They are "editorial matter," as it were, published as "news," unlike "deaths," which are found in the advertisement part of the paper. While in former times such advertisements were rather sentimental they now only state the fact that (my dear husband, wife, etc.) N.N. has died (from illness, suddenly) at the age of so-and-so years' age. During the interval between the death and the burial—generally four or five days—the advertisement in question is inserted in two or three papers; one of them, as a rule, being an Oslo paper, if the death has taken place in the Province. It is, therefore, not without importance to people in Norway to cast a glance at the "list of deaths" in the paper, as in nine cases out of ten they are only informed in this way. It is considered an act of politeness to attend a funeral; but, as a rule, is considered somewhat of duty as far as relatives and friends are concerned; the same applies to the sending of flowers. In case of a wreath being sent from a family it will be accompanied by the visiting cards of Mr. and Mrs. N.N. Thanks are returned by advertisements in the papers, signed by the "chief mourners" jointly, while privately a visiting card with mourning borders is forwarded in an open envelope, likewise with mourning borders.

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Funerals in the country, as a rule, take place from the "mourning house"; in towns from a chapel in the churchyard to which wreaths are sent. The funeral itself and everything which appertains to it is arranged through a "funeral bureau." Outside the house of the deceased person the pavement is strewn with branches of pine trees, according to a very old custom. After the funeral all flags go from half-mast to the top.

The customs and manners of the Norwegians necessarily are outlined here but briefly, and afford only a peep into the life of the nation. Yet there is one particular feature which should not be passed—the conspicuous part which sport is playing in the life of the Norwegian youth.

Sport is not regarded by all the Norwegians as merely a competition for prizes, but is followed with the aim of developing the physical and moral strength of the nation. Sport also constitutes a very important historical link between the past and the present, which has been more and more appreciated within the last generation. The fame of a number of the heroes of the Saga period rests to a great extent on their ability as sportsmen—their consummate skill and wonderful endurance as skiers, rowers, and swimmers; had football been known at that time they would certainly also have been first-class players, for next to ski-ing no sport in Norway is more popular than football. It actually holds at present the same leading position as a summer sport, as ski-ing holds as a winter sport.

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Love of sport and love of nature in Norway go hand in hand, and accordingly all unite in giving it their support and guidance in the right direction, "towards the increasing development of a nobler and more broad-minded patriotism."

CHAPTER IV

OSLO THE CAPITAL

THE name of Oslo which, since January 1, 1925, has replaced the name of Christiania, by which the capital of Norway was officially known to the world for three centuries, is of a very ancient standing.

Nothing is known about the origin of Oslo or the first adoption of the name, which seems to mean "the town on the swampy field at the foot of the mountain." There is, however, every reason to suppose that Oslo is one of the oldest towns in Norway, thanks to her excellent geographical situation at the bottom of a large fjord, with an easy access to the sea and a no less easy connection with the adjacent wood districts in the interior of the country. Anyhow, Oslo was a fairly thriving place when she was granted—presumably in 1047—the rights and privileges of a city by the famous warrior-king, Harold the Hardruler. It was this Harold who nineteen years invaded England, where he was repulsed and fell in the decisive battle at Stamford Bridge some weeks before William of Normandy crossed the Channel.

In 1070 Oslo was raised to the dignity of a diocesan town, and during the subsequent one

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hundred and seventy years, the greater part of which coincides with the age of the Civil Wars, Oslo was the stronghold of clericalism, with an important clerical body who exercised a considerable influence on the population. About the year 1300, when the power of the clergy was on the decline, King Haakon V, the last King of the Royal House of Haarfagre, made Oslo his residential town—a fact which quite naturally added to its importance. At the same time he laid the foundation of the famous fortress of Akershus on the western side of the Björvik, which, by the way, constitutes the principal part of the harbour of modern Oslo.

Nowhere is a foreigner who wants to be acquainted with the history of the city in closer touch with it than within the walls of this ancient fortress, which forms, in fact, the connecting link between Oslo past and present. Next to the Cathedral of Trondhjem and the Royal Hall at Bergen, Akershus stands out as the most monumental construction in Norway from the Saga period. It has been a matter of discussion for years past, whether the fortress was originally constructed on practically its present scale, or whether it has gradually been enlarged in the course of centuries; but at present the former view must be said to have been established beyond doubt. This fact adds greatly to the interest of the fortress both from a historical and architectural point of view, and it is easy to see how skilfully the royal constructor has under-

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stood how to turn to account the natural surroundings for defensive purposes. So effectively this has been done that no enemy has ever unfurled his banner on the walls of Akershus. Accordingly, Akershus, as already suggested, became one of the great monuments of Norwegian history, and its restoration to its former splendour, as far as it is possible, has already begun. It is true that owing to the "westward tendency" of the city, the Fortress is no longer the favourite promenade which it used to be some generations ago, when the majority of the population lived within a short distance from it; but foreign visitors who wish to have a fine view of the harbour and its surroundings should not fail to take a walk on the upper part of the walls of Akershus. Go thither, especially on a summer evening when the last colours of the sky are fading and silence begins to prevail! It is a view not easily to be forgotten, and it has, in fact, inspired Ibsen with one of the finest poems in Norwegian literature, filled with an exquisite beauty begotten alike of impressions from nature and history.

The history of Akershus from the beginning of the fourteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century is so intimately associated with the history of Oslo as to be practically identical. In the course of this period a remarkable event took place in the city of special interest to British visitors, although no trace is left of the buildings mentioned in connection with it. The event in question was the marriage of James VI

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of Scotland, afterward James I of England, with the Dano-Norwegian Princess Anne, which, owing to a number of unforeseen circumstances, happened to take place at Oslo on November 22, 1589. It was through this Oslo marriage that Scotland, and England eventually, secured the official possession of the Orkney Islands, the strategic importance of which was realized only during the Great War.

In 1624 a disastrous fire, which practically swept Oslo out of existence, resulted in a change of paramount importance to her future. It had at that time repeatedly been proved that Akershus was incapable of defending the city of Oslo and accordingly Christian IV, the actual King of Denmark and Norway, ordered the citizens of Oslo to migrate to the western side of the Björvik and take up their abode in a new town, the boundaries of which he staked out in the proximity of the Fortress, and to which, in commemoration of himself, he gave the name of *Christiania*.

The history of Christiania is quickly told.

For fully 190 years the development was an exceedingly slow one. Christiania lived in the shade of Copenhagen, as Norway lived in the shade of Denmark. The city had no University and no National Bank ; but this did not prevent Christiania from developing a cultural and social life of her own entirely different from that of Copenhagen. This life was especially in evidence in the latter decades of the eighteenth and the first seven years of the nineteenth century, before

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the war with England set in and spoilt the effects of an economic boom, unparalleled until then. It is on record that British visitors nowhere felt more at home than among the wealthy merchants and shipowners of "Londonized" Christiania. These people spoke English fluently; they also had elegant houses filled with exquisite furniture and valuable books; in fact, their life, both social and educational, was to a remarkable degree influenced by the Spirit of the West. It is true that this intimate connection between England and Norway was subjected to a painful rupture during the war between England and the Dano-Norwegian monarchy; but as soon as peace was restored, the estrangement caused by the war soon disappeared, and the former friendly intercourse resumed its old footing.

The new state of things in Norway brought about by the events of 1814 quite naturally revealed itself nowhere more strikingly than at Christiania; but nevertheless it was not until in the latter half of the fifties that Christiania was able to burst her narrow confines and join hands with Oslo, which for two centuries had led the indolent life of an obscure suburb. From that juncture Christiania developed into a modern business town on a European scale, while at the same time her municipal institutions grew in proportion. Through this remarkable evolution brought about by a number of circumstances, too many to detail, the capital of Norway eventually became, what it is to-day, the com-

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mercial centre of the country, with imports amounting to 60 per cent of that of the whole kingdom, while the exports may be stated as 16 per cent.

As one of the chief characteristics of modern Oslo may be mentioned the extensive port arrangements for the accommodation of the ever-increasing fleet of passenger steamers and carriers passing in and out all the year round, and the no less important extension of the railway system, which has its natural centre in the capital. Another feature of particular interest also deserves to be remembered. Unlike Bergen and Trondhjem and several other Norwegian towns, Oslo has no trade or industry which can properly be called her own. She may be described as collecting within her limits all the various trades and manufactures of the country, just as she is absorbing an ever-increasing population from all parts of Norway.

The great majority of the working population of Oslo live on the eastern side of the river Akerselven, which most foreign visitors never get a glimpse of, and which even thousands of Oslo people practically only know by name. The reason is that the Akerselven, along which are situated a number of industrial buildings, does not mean to Oslo what the Thames means to London, or the Seine to Paris. Nevertheless these East-end quarters present a number of characteristic features and scenery, while the population itself is gifted with a certain dry humour ex-

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pressed in a language which never appeals in vain to the Oslo mind.

An English visitor arriving at Oslo will soon make the discovery that there is, in fact, only one street in the city of actual importance to him. The street which bears the name of Karl Johans gate (*street*)—always abbreviated to Karl Johan—runs in a straight line from the Railway Square to the Royal Palace, which closes the view on the top of the hill on which it is situated, and from where it overlooks the whole length of the street. The street derives its name from King Karl Johan, originally a Frenchman, who, starting as a soldier in the army of revolutionary France, gradually rose to the position of general and marshal of the empire, and, finally, was elected Crown Prince of Sweden under the name of Karl Johan. In this capacity he became the central figure in the events leading up to the Union between Norway and Sweden in 1814, and four years later he became the joint King of Norway and Sweden, and the founder of the Bernadotte Dynasty, still ruling in Sweden.

In 1825 Karl Johan laid the foundation-stone of the Royal Palace outside of which now stands his equestrian statue, unveiled in 1875. Owing to a number of circumstances, among which economic difficulties played the most conspicuous part, the completion of the Palace extended over a period of twenty-three years, and for the same reason the architectural scheme—planned by a famous architect by the name of Linstow—also

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had to be curtailed considerably. The Royal Palace at the time of its foundation and a number of years afterwards was situated out of town in rural surroundings without any regular connection with the city. It was the genius of Linstow who first realized the importance of the Palace, and towards the end of the thirties urged the necessity of connecting the City with the Palace by a thoroughfare of European dimensions, flanked by a number of conspicuous buildings. In 1840 a beginning was made with the present Karl Johan Street, which originally comprised only the special part of the street now extending from the foot of the Palace Hill to the Storting.

Along this street gradually rose, besides a number of conspicuous private houses, the University Buildings, completed in 1852; the Storting Building, inaugurated in 1866; and the National Theatre, which opened its season in the autumn of 1899, as the successor of the Christiania Theatre in the older part of the City. Thereby the Karl Johan very early became the principal street of the capital, and for more than three generations it has been the true exponent of its life and manners.

Situated in the midst of forest-clad hills in a broad valley opening out to the fjord, Oslo is the natural stopping-place for Norwegians and foreigners on their way to the mountains and to the western fjords, while, thanks to its natural surroundings, excellent conditions exist for culti-

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vating the sporting life for which the youths of the capital are justly famous. The winter season is principally devoted to ski-ing, a form of sport high in favour within all ranks of society, irrespective of age, while in the summer the fjord is filled with white sails, rowing boats, and swimmers. This part of the year in which Oslo not rarely is among the warmest cities in Europe, is the typical tourist season, when foreign visitors give a certain international character to the city, while thousands of her own inhabitants are in the mountains or at the seaside.

Yet, even at that time Oslo, as already suggested, is by no means an unattractive place, thanks to the easy access to the fjord, where the different forms of sporting life are displayed to the passengers on board the small steamers plying in the inner part of the fjord, some on regular routes, some on routes especially arranged for the purpose of giving visitors a little idea of the wonderful archipelago, which can be traversed on a tour covering a couple of hours.

Those who prefer the forest with its silence and fragrance to the busy life on the fjord may have the choice of frequent and comfortable electric tram-cars running between the city and its uphill surroundings from early in the morning till late at night. Within less than one hour one may find oneself deep in the realm of nature, surrounded by majestic spruce and firs. Here and there a pond or lake glitters like an eye, or a sudden opening in the wood reveals the distant



Photo

W ilse

THE KARL JOHANS GATE (CHARLES JOHN STREET)

This is the upper part of the street, the royal palace closing the view, and the cupola of the National Theatre rising to the left.

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city and the fjord far below—a splendid panorama not easily forgotten.

Oslo on a winter day also is a sight worth seeing, especially after a heavy snowfall, when the parks along the Karl Johan and the adjacent Drammensveien are lying dazzling white in the sunshine of the brief day, the trees and bushes laden with snow. The busy life in the inner part of the city quite naturally takes no note of the virgin purity of the snow; but in the environs, under ordinary circumstances, the winter displays itself in all its beauty from the latter half of December until towards the end of March.

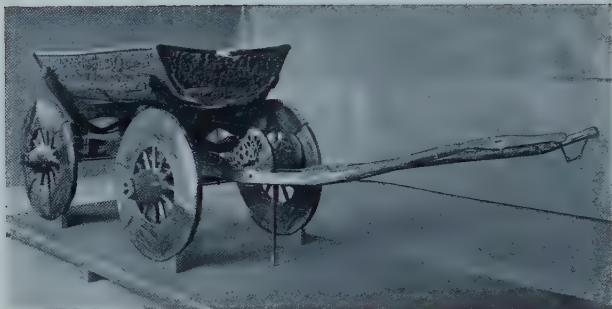
Throughout the whole of this period Oslo is under the spell of ski-ing. Talking about weather forecasts, hopes for a fine “ski-Sunday” are raised or damped; if bad weather should set in they speak of a “ski-Sunday” lost, a characteristic proof of the intimate association between “skis” and “Sundays.” There is, in fact, no scene of more extraordinary animation than that which presents itself on a fine “ski-Sunday” at the Majorstuen station, the starting-point of the Holmenhol Railway, when tens of thousands in sporting costume, big and little, young and old, all provided with skis or sleighs are on their way up to the heights. Up here take place the annual international ski-ing competitions known all over the world as the “Holmenhol Races,” with “standing jumps” varying from some thirty to upwards of fifty yards—a feat astounding to

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those who witness it for the first time. There are, however, several hills within easy reach of Oslo where important ski races are taking place and where the localities admit of still larger jumps.

In this way the winter season may rightly be recommended to foreigners who wish to see one of the most characteristic aspects of Oslo life and manners. At this time society life also is at its brightest; simultaneously, foreigners interested in political and social questions have the best opportunity possible of meeting leading personalities able to supply them with information wanted, since this part of the year coincides with the Storting session. Even those foreigners who are unacquainted with the Norwegian language should not fail to spend half an hour in attending a sitting in the National Assembly of Norway. No admission tickets or cards of introduction are required, there being absolutely free access to the galleries to any person. The proceedings, in conformity with traditions and rules of more than a century's standing, are conducted with the greatest decorum, no cheers or expressions of disapproval being allowed either on the part of the Assembly or of the public.

At Easter the Storting adjourns for a fortnight, and at the same time thousands of people go away to the mountains to enjoy the sport of skiing. In fact, Easter time has more and more become the favourite time for excursions from the city, and quite naturally; for if Easter sets in with favourable weather conditions, no season



Photos

O. Væring

THE CARRIAGE OF THE OSEBERG QUEEN AND THE OSEBERG SHIP

This beautiful Viking ship, containing two female skeletons and the royal carriage, was discovered in a mound at the Oseberg Farm in the county of Vestfold, on the Oslofjord. It was excavated in 1904 and now forms one of the most interesting sights of Oslo.

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can be more delightful. People return brown as mulattoes after free exposure to the dazzling sun in the mountains and morning baths in the snow. In fact, "Easter brown" is at this time of the year the favourite colour of the Oslo youths.

The spring season draws to a close in the course of the next two or three weeks after the celebration of the Constitution Day (May 17), when the school children of Oslo, to the number of 25,000 to 30,000, march up the Karl Johans to the Royal Palace under their school banners—boys and girls of all ages provided with flags. It goes without saying that the "children's procession" on the Constitution Day is no particular Oslo feature; similar processions are taking place all over Norway in commemoration of the day, and for the purpose of instilling in the young minds an early feeling of the historical connection between past and present, and convey an idea of the obligations of the present generation to the generations which have passed away.

Notwithstanding the various attractions of Oslo in the seasons already mentioned, September is perhaps the month which should be particularly recommended for an Oslo visit, to say nothing of the fact that this month is extremely suitable for a trip to East and West Norway in general. September opens the autumn season. From the mountains and from the seaside people have already returned to the capital by thousands, and the homes are again assuming their ordinary

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appearance after the holidays, which end about August 20. This applies not only to Oslo, but to the towns of Norway in general; practically all schools resume their work by this date.

The annual University celebrations, which cover the first three days of September, mark another conspicuous event of the season. The University—the only one in the country up to the present day—was officially founded on September 2, 1811, and ever since it has been the custom to celebrate this event. For considerably more than two generations the young students who had taken their B.A. degree before the holidays got their certificate of matriculation on that particular day; but owing to the constantly increasing number of young men and women, now taking their B.A. degree, not only in view of their future studies, but for the purpose of giving a finishing touch to their general education, it has become necessary to have the matriculation ceremonies extended over the two first days of September.

The ceremony is this: the examination takes place in May–June. When it is over the young man has become student and is entitled to wear his student's cap, if he likes. He certainly prefers to go away for his holidays. When he returns he is officially matriculated. On September 1 or 2 he goes to the University Celebrations, where he gets his certificate, shakes hands with the Rector of the University, and withdraws. If he should be unable to attend he has his degree by

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virtue of his examination and may obtain his certificate from the University office without any ceremony.

Simultaneously a number of elderly gentlemen and ladies from all parts of the country are making a holiday trip to Oslo for the celebrating of their twenty-fifth or their fiftieth anniversary as students; the latter set, however, so far only embracing mostly men, women were admitted to the University in 1884. These celebrations, which generally cover three days annually, constitute important bonds between old students belonging to the same year, memories and friendships of old days being revived and particulars related as to what has happened in the course of the long interval.

Even foreigners unacquainted with the University traditions of Norway will not fail to be struck by the animated appearance of the upper part of the Karl Johan during these days, when students hailing from years divided by generations all wear their students' caps as a joint symbol of their academic relationship. These caps, the most conspicuous part of which is a heavy silk tassel falling down on the shoulder from the centre of the crown, to which it is attached by a silk string, are made of folded cloth resting on a round black cloth thong, lined with white just underneath the crown; in front the cap is provided with a small peak crowned by the national (red, blue, and white) cockade and a miniature silver emblem, representing Minerva,

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the goddess of wisdom. Striking though these caps are, they cannot be described as particularly easy head coverings—a fact which we are able to state from personal experience, and accordingly they are only worn on special occasions. In everyday life there is nothing particular about the students of the University of Oslo; in fact, it still holds good what the well-known British traveller, Samuel Laing, wrote about them in 1836: “The students of this University have none of the silly propensities of the German students—no affectation of being a separate class or of distinguishing themselves as *Burschen*, by peculiarity of dress or roughness of manners. They are dressed like other gentlemen—live like the students at Edinburgh, mixed with the inhabitants and associating with them.”

The opening of the autumn season is not, however, restricted to the general return of the inhabitants of the city and to the University celebrations. The month of September also coincides with the opening of the theatre season proper, when the theatres which generally are closed from the second week of June until the second week of August are in full swing, putting new plays in rehearsal. The leading theatre of Oslo is the National Theatre, which is justly famous for its high artistic level—a fact revealed alike through its performances of Norwegian as well as of foreign plays, among them a number of Shakespeare's. Over the portico of the National Theatre are inscribed in golden letters



Photo

Realistic Travels, London

THE NORANG VALLEY

A district of charming scenery surrounded by rugged mountains and enclosing a beautiful fjord.

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in the centre, the name of Holberg, the founder of modern Norwegian literature, and on either side of it the names of Ibsen and Björnson, the founders of the modern Norwegian drama, whose characteristic statues, both erected in their lifetime, are standing in the square in front of the Theatre.

As it will appear from the above, the capital of Norway is in all essentials a modern city, with few memories of the past within her boundaries. Besides Akershus, which we have already mentioned, stand out a number of highly interesting ruins which have been brought to light within recent years on the site of ancient Oslo, by which several points at issue bearing upon the history of the city in the Saga period have been definitely settled. Two other striking evidences of the Saga period are the famous viking ships, known as the *Gokstad* ship and the *Oseberg* ship, both dating from about A.D. 900. These ships which were excavated in 1880 and 1904, respectively, from burial mounds in the ancient county of Vestfold on the western side of the Oslofjord have ever since been placed in sheds in the immediate vicinity of the University Buildings from which the *Oseberg* ship was transferred to a special shed at Bygdøy (Folk Museum) in the course of 1926. They have been fixed up in the most exquisitely scientific way, surrounded by a number of the many curious articles which they contained, and which can be seen nowhere else, as these ships are, in fact, unique of their kind in Europe.

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Among other things which should be seen at Oslo are the pictures and sculptures of the National Gallery, the description of which may, however, more conveniently be reserved for the chapter of the present volume dealing with literature and art.

The City Museum in the splendid Frogner Park, in the western part of modern Oslo, is another place worth seeing; for here a visitor to Oslo is able to follow the remarkable development of the city closely, especially the three hundred years during which the city bore the name of Christiania (1624–1924). From a local point of view the numerous pictures in the various rooms of the Museum, representing quaint old buildings, interesting views of streets and squares, market scenes, port traffic, etc., are a perfect guide through the labyrinth of history, while at the same time a splendid collection of portraits, painted from life, convey to the visitor an idea of the men by whose work from generation to generation Oslo has eventually become the capital of Norway in the widest sense of the word.

Another splendid museum which no foreign visitor should fail to see is the Norwegian Folk Museum at Bygdøy, in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital.

In no other place in Norway is there a similar collection of practically everything bearing upon the development of the country. Covering an area of about 360 acres, the Folk Museum pre-

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sents the picture of a little old-fashioned place with nearly sixty buildings of different kinds—ancient church buildings, old farm-houses, and characteristic town buildings—all containing about 40,000 articles. The Hallingdal, the Setesdal, and the Telemark valleys are represented by farm-houses typical of each of these districts, and containing a large and varied collection of implements, utensils, attires, musical instruments, etc. Characteristic exhibits of the Österdal, Gudbrandsdal, and Valdres valleys are also shown. The capital itself is represented by a number of exact models in miniature of old Christiania houses, as well as by some houses pulled down at Christiania and erected again at Bygdøy, a very good idea of the general appearance of the city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In short, a tour through the houses, churches, and collections of the Folk Museum at Bygdøy is a tour through Norway in the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance and in Modern Times, conveying a very vivid impression of the evolution of civilization in this country in the course of centuries. It is through the same evolution that the capital of Norway has passed through the stages of Ancient Oslo and Christiania to Modern Oslo with the Fortress of Akershus as the connecting link.

A feature in the development of Oslo is the “garden” towns by which she is surrounded to the east, to the north, and to the west. The interest and admiration which these “garden

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cities " have, with justice, called forth from distinguished visitors is striking evidence of municipal liberality and foresight, and no one who is interested in the universal housing problem should fail to see how ably the capital of Norway has tried to solve it in practice.



Photo

THE TRONDHJEM CATHEDRAL

The National sanctuary of Norway. It faces the view of the famous Munkegaten (Monk Street) in which are situated some of the finest buildings of the city.

Ennerd-Wilse

CHAPTER V

EAST NORWAY

AS it will appear from the previous chapter, Oslo does not afford so many sights as a number of other European capitals ; but, on the other hand, she is justly famous for her natural surroundings, to which a number of travellers, among them several English, have paid an ungrudging tribute. It is true that the Oslofjord, both in the vicinity of the capital and farther out towards the open sea, lacks the wild grandeur of the West and North Norway fjords ; but in its sheltered waters, its numerous wooded islands and islets, as well as in its splendid summer climate, warm and at the same time filled with a bracing air, it possesses assets invaluable both to mind and body.

The same applies to the part of Norway, popularly known as Sörlandet (Southland), the coast-line of which may broadly be described as running from the nearest districts south of the Oslofjord to the districts in the southern neighbourhood of Stavanger. The skerries protecting the greater part of this coast-line make a journey in these waters a journey in a perfect archipelago of islands and islets, with an infinite number of sounds and straits, often with the most surprising outlets, all

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framed by the "azure main" which glitters here and there far out. For rowing, yachting, swimming, and fishing no part of Norway is more excellently adapted, while the population itself is famous for its seafaring traditions—a splendid record from generation to generation of courage and resolution. Along this coast-line are situated most of the minor towns, the importance of which we have outlined in the chapter, "Past and Present"; here is the cradle of Norwegian shipping, the home of the white sails, which were the pride of Norway down to the last decades of the nineteenth century. There is hardly a family all along this coast which has not had to give up one of its dear ones to the sea; nevertheless the love of the sea, inborn in the people, has stood the test of all bereavements. Here, if anywhere, Byron's splendid stanzas come true:

"I have loved the Ocean, and my joy
Of youthful sport was on thy breast to be
Borne like thy bubbles onward . . .

.
For I was, as it were, a child of thee."

At Christianssand, the most important town along the whole of this coast-line, we find ourselves in the "Capital of the Sörland"—to use a well-known favourite name. Founded in 1641 by King Christian IV, Christianssand, notwithstanding its royal origin and name and several other tokens of royal favour, remained a rather

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retrograde place down to the middle of the nineteenth century ; from that time, however, thanks to its excellent situation, it gradually became the centre of the ever-increasing steamship traffic on this part of the coast.

The capital of the Sörland is connected by a narrow gauge line with its *hinterland*, the Setesdal. This highly interesting valley unites a number of the most typical attractions of East and West Norway, some of its landscapes possessing an intimate charm, others a wild grandeur. So far as customs and manners are concerned, the Setesdal is even more remarkable, as up to a comparatively recent date the people of this valley led a more isolated life than the inhabitants of perhaps any other valley in Norway. As a consequence the Setesdal is extremely attractive from a tourist point of view, while at the same time it affords excellent opportunities to all students of ancient customs, costumes, dialects, folk-lore, music, etc. It is true, however, that the conditions brought about by the railway, the motor-car, the motor boat, and other improved communications have, to a considerable extent, divested this old-fashioned district of quite a number of its typical attributes and charms ; but fortunately the innate sterling qualities of the population of the Setesdal still survive. As a special feature may be mentioned that in the uppermost part of the Setesdal people still are wearing their ancient costumes in their daily life. These costumes are very heavy, especially the

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women's costumes, so that one must become accustomed to them from childhood.

No less interesting than the Setesdal is the Telemark, the eastern neighbour of the Setesdal, to which it offers several striking points of resemblance both as to nature and population. Long before a number of the most favourite tourist districts of to-day had ever been "discovered," the Telemark used to be visited by Norwegian and foreign tourists, the latter chiefly British, who penetrated into this remarkable valley, the nature of which appealed to them by the charms and grandeur of its scenery no less than did the population by its old-fashioned customs and manners, its quaint and attractive costumes and dances, and its wonderfully rich folk-lore, full of tales, songs, and music for which the whole nation is indebted to the Telemark people. It may be mentioned in the same connection that the Telemark, although but one of the many valleys in Norway in which the sport of ski-ing has been practised from time immemorial, is surely the valley where it has developed with the most consummate skill, and to the highest degree of perfection, especially so far as "jumping" is concerned.

Like the Setesdal the Telemark, as already suggested, has come under the influence of later times, and accordingly the romance of the past to a great extent had to recede into background. It was the chief characteristic of the Telemark in former days that, unlike the Setesdal and several



Photo

W'ilse

SETESDAL PEASANTS

They are on a visit to Christiansand, wearing their local costume of black, relieved with bright colours.

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other valleys where there were general costumes typical of the whole valley, there were in the Telemark special costumes for nearly every district of the valley. This feature naturally added greatly to the animation of the market life of Skien, the capital of the Telemark and the birthplace of Henrik Ibsen, as displayed in former days. Some costumes may still be seen at Skien on market days, and in the upper valleys they have not been dropped; but, generally speaking, the population has been carried away by the mighty current of the time, just as nature herself has had to yield to the conquering genius of man as perhaps nowhere else in Norway, and the valley where it has been developed with the most consummate skill and to the highest degree of perfection, especially so far as "jumping" is concerned.

One example will be sufficient.

The Telemark, among other things, has always been famous for her waterfalls, the mightiest of which—in fact, the mightiest not only in Norway, but in the whole of Europe—was the Rjukan. Up to 1906 this magnificent cataract, the name of which is derived from the veil of foam "reeking" above it, hurled its volumes of water from a height of 105 yards into the fantastic depth below. It was the pride of the Telemark and the object of admiration of three generations of tourists. Six years later the Rjukan was harnessed for industrial purposes and disappeared from view; it now runs through a number of gigantic

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tubes into a power station of proportionate dimensions.

Yet all this is only a comparatively small part of East Norway proper. Those who wish to see and study the whole of this vast territory must, first of all, have plenty of time, and besides this an open eye for the varied beauties of nature, and the no less varied characteristics of man, as they appear in Österdal, Gudbrandsdal, and Valdres, the principal valleys of Norway.

Starting at Elverum, a thriving little inland place, some 110 miles to the north of Oslo, we find ourselves at the beginning of the Österdal (Eastern Valley); of the customs and manners and how they have changed in the course of time we get a fair idea from the local museum. Of all Norwegian valleys the Österdal is certainly the one which is least known to foreign tourists; yet it has a beauty of its own, which retains its place in the memory of those who have ever come under its charm. Situated near the most eastern boundary of the country towards the Swedish frontier the Österdal, which is the largest valley in Norway, is in its whole length intersected by the Glommen, the largest river in the country, and the one which undoubtedly is of the greatest importance to the timber floating as well as to the wood-refining industry in general. Every description of the Österdal, whether the aspect be social or literary, therefore breathes the sentiment imbued by forest.



Photo

Wilse

BRATLAND VALLEY

One of the grandest sights of the famous Telemark district from which there is a picturesque road across the country to West Norway.

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Nothing is more natural ; for, in fact, nowhere in Norway is the serene beauty of the spruce and fir trees so exuberantly rich as here. It embraces one, as it were ; fascinates one for miles and miles with its wonderful aroma. There is no whispering more intimate than the soft breeze through these woods on a summer evening at sunset ; no sight more charming than the large river on its way to the distant Skagarack, carrying on its broad back hundreds of logs which, sometimes single, sometimes in the shape of large rafts, generally float past in a leisurely way quite in keeping with their surroundings, the characteristic feature of which is that of calm and repose.

In the depth of these woods is the ideal home of the elk, the capercailzie and the black grouse ; here live traditions of daring huntsmen in the lawful or unlawful pursuit of game ; here are the log-cutters at work with their bright axes. It may be a matter of opinion whether the forest looks its best in the summer, when everything is green and fragrant, or in the winter, when, laden with snow, it glitters in the sunshine with all the fantastic beauty of dazzling whiteness. In fact, the winter is the favourite season over great parts of the Österdal, and from a ski-ing point of view they are perfectly ideal. This form of sport is as ancient here as in the Telemark, and in Trysil, for instance, one of the typical districts of the valley, ski-ing is bound up with some of the finest tales and verses of the local folk-lore.

Better known, at least to foreign tourists than

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the Österdal, is the Gudbrandsdal, a broad mighty valley with some large ramifications of an exceedingly varied character, from time immemorial the high road between South Norway and the Trondhjem district as well as the districts on the coast of the Atlantic now connected with Oslo by the Rauma Railway. From a historical point of view no valley in Norway is more intimately associated with the development of the nation through the various ages, and broadly speaking the Gudbrandsdalen, which covers the north and western part of the bishopric of Hamar, can be described as the gem among Norwegian valleys. It combines in a remarkable way all the chief characteristics of East and West Norway, the picturesque smiling quietness of the former with the lofty overwhelming grandeur of the latter.

Some of the most noticeable aspects in the character of the population are in no small degree a product of these surroundings. The Gudbrandsdal peasant is a modest, straightforward fellow, with a mind as open and genial as his farm-house overlooking the valley from the top of the hill, with the sunny highland pastures in the upper mountains ; but at the same time he is full of energy and perseverance and in possession of a high mentality. The proofs of this have been preserved in the Sandvig or Maihaug (May Hill) Collections at Lillehammer at the northern end of Lake Mjösen, the largest lake of Norway. These Collections, which are due to

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the assiduous efforts of a local dentist, Mr. Anders Sandvig, from whom the Collections have derived their name, have been arranged on a perfectly new principle. We do not find at the Maihaug a large museum building filled with varied collections of curios; on the contrary, we find a number of houses, from various parts of the large valley, pulled down and re-erected on the Maihaug and fitted out just as they were in the past, illustrating different epochs of history. Even one of the churches of the valley has been pulled down and rebuilt at the Maihaugen. Thus nothing is wanting to make it complete. The Maihaug is the Gudbrandsdal in a nutshell; its collections are filled with the breath of life, and the very spirit of the valley. The men and women of the past, as they went about their daily work, seem to rise before us, as we walk through the rooms of the Maihaug houses, looking at their interesting utensils and implements so cleverly adapted to their purpose.

The third of the large valleys of East Norway is Valdres, to the south-west of Gudbrandsdalen. This valley, may broadly be described as perhaps the most beautiful mountain valley of Norway, as well as one of the earliest to be inhabited. Numerous finds from various ages have been made in Valdres, including the oldest Runic stone in Norway, which shows that people had settled in Valdres some fifteen hundred years ago. Through Valdres, from time immemorial, ran the high road between East and West Nor-

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way ; but notwithstanding this, the valley itself is not often mentioned in the Sagas, and no event of importance has ever taken place there. The reason is obvious. Valdres was situated too far away in the interior of country to attract much attention. The remoteness of Valdres from the rest of Norway had the same effect here as we have seen was the case with the Setesdal and the Telemark. The valley gave rise to a population imbued with an intense spirit of individuality—resolute, daring, remarkably gifted in various sorts of handicraft, especially silver filigree and wood-carving. At the same time the Valdres people were extremely fond of music and all kinds of folk-lore, created undoubtedly to no small extent by the imposing natural surroundings of their lonely valley. It is true that quite a number of these traditions of the past have faded considerably during the late generation, owing to the easy communication with the rest of Norway by the Valdres Railway (1906) ; yet the ancient hospitality still survives. The Valdres peasant accustomed through centuries to receive visitors, knows how to perform his duties as a host ; and accordingly people always enjoy a visit to his splendid valley.

Situated between Valdres and Gudbrandsdalen, to the north of the former and the south-west of the latter, and washed from the west by the ramifications of the Sognefjord is the Jotunheim, the highest mountain district not only in Norway, but in Northern Europe. The Jotunheim, which

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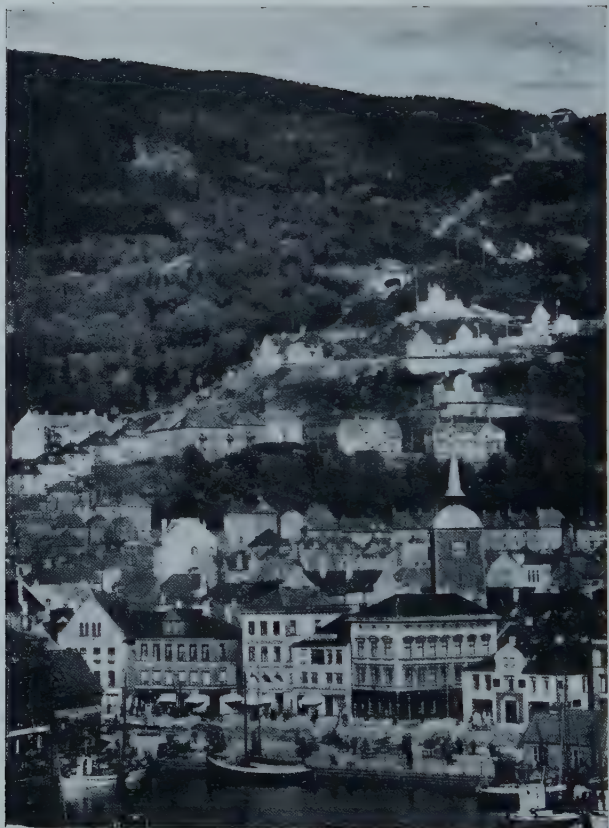
was, in fact, only discovered a century ago, may be described as an imposing conglomeration of peaks, glaciers, lakes, and torrents full of magnificent scenery. It is accessible by various routes, of which perhaps the grandest is the one leading from Lom in the upper part of the Gudbrandsdal southwards straight into the very heart of the Jotunheim. The highest peak in the Jotunheim is the Galdhøpigg, roughly about 7500 feet high, which every summer is ascended by a number of tourists, including even several septuagenarians; for the mountain is excellently supplied with accommodation, arranged by the Norwegian Tourist Association and private persons. The view from the top of Galdhøpigg towards the west, across snow-fields and glaciers, rugged peaks and deep ravines, while farthest out the blue of the waters of the Atlantic Ocean glitters in the splendour of the Northern summer, bids fair to challenge the most imposing views in any European country.

Through the Jotunheim we get a glimpse into the fantastic fairyland of West Norway, and quite naturally we wish to penetrate into it. We reach this part of the country quickest and most conveniently by the Bergen Railway, which was opened to traffic in 1909, at a cost of about £3,000,000, or some £10,000 per mile. As an engineering feat the Bergen Railway, which runs through the Hallingdal, a typical East Norway valley, across the mountains to West Norway, is justly famous, while from a tourist point of view

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it is unsurpassed in its variety from the sweetest and softest charm to the most fantastic wildness.


Without going into details it may be sufficient to state that the Bergen Railway, on the construction and scenery of which there is an excellent little pamphlet in English, published by the Norwegian State Railways, ascends to the height of approximately 4000 feet above the sea, and accordingly beyond the limit of trees, across bare mountains covered with ice and snow, even in midsummer. The greater part of the railway line across the mountains is protected by high wooden shelters against the tremendous winter snowfalls, and thanks to the heavy "high-mountain engines," "rotating snow-plough engines," and a staff of skilled employees, the service is being kept up with an admirable regularity even in the heaviest winters. Frequent tunnels swallow up the train, the longest being the Gravehals Tunnel, which is close on four miles. Seen from the east it opens at Myrdal Station at the height of about 2900 feet above the sea, when the westward-bound train is already going down-hill after having passed the well-known places, Gjeilo, Haugastøl, and Finse. The last named, which enjoys international reputation as one of the finest winter resorts in Europe, has within recent years been more and more frequented by English lovers of ski-ing, for which it affords excellent opportunities, especially from February to May when daylight grows constantly



Photo

Mittet

BERGEN

The part of the city known as "Triangelen," with the famous fish market in the foreground. From the top of the "Fløifjelder," which rises behind the town, a magnificent view of city and fjord may be obtained. 

East Norway

longer and the sunshine of a new year adds to the dazzling beauty of the landscape.

The rest of the journey goes through typical West Norway scenery of a more or less austere character until the train eventually runs into Bergen, popularly known as "the City amidst the Seven Mountains."

CHAPTER VI

BERGEN, OR THE CITY AMIDST THE SEVEN MOUNTAINS

BERGEN, the capital of West Norway, holds a position of her own among the towns of Norway. Oslo is more than twice as large and more intimately connected with the development of modern Norway; Trondhjem is deeply rooted in the historical consciousness of the nation. Yet, neither the history of Oslo nor that of Trondhjem is imbued with the spirit of independence which pervades the history of Bergen. At a time when the capital of East Norway, as well as the capital of North Norway, were practically swallowed up by the "sea of troubles" which swept the country, the capital of West Norway rose like a lonely lighthouse, from which the flash of the national spirit never ceased to welcome foreign enterprise. Hence, Bergen, at a critical juncture, became the most national and at the same time the most cosmopolitan town in Norway.

Bergen was founded about 1070 by King Olav Kyrre (Peaceful), the son of Harold the Hardruler, whom we have already mentioned as the official founder of Oslo. Impressed by what he had seen and learnt in England, King Olav had Bergen

Bergen

planned, constructed, and regulated after the pattern of the English seaports of his age. Yet his ambition did not restrict itself to the foundation of an English-modelled town; he also wished to imbue it with the commercial spirit which he had learnt to appreciate in England, and for that purpose he tried to induce foreigners, especially Englishmen and Scots, to settle at Bergen, at the same time granting them certain privileges. The name of the new town was Björgvin (the meadow at the foot of the hill), which the English, who could not pronounce the name properly, soon changed into Bervin. In this form the name of the city continued alongside with Björgvin through the greater part of the Saga period, until eventually both names were superseded by that of Bergen—the Hanseatic name of the city—by which she has officially been known since the latter half of the fourteenth century.

The history of Bergen during the first three centuries of her existence, highly interesting as it is from a national and political point of view, has a cultural and economic aspect of interest to Englishmen. During this period a number of churches and monasteries were built, all in Anglo-Norman style, of which, however, there only remains to-day the venerable St. Mary's Church, built in 1188, with two towers and a nave separated from the smaller and lower aisles by great square pillars. Economically viewed it is to the credit of the English trading with Bergen

Bergen, or the City amidst

in the Middle Ages that in co-operation with their Norwegian friends they did their utmost to meet the competition started by the Hanseatic League ; but eventually they were overwhelmed by the Germans, who, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, established themselves in a particular quarter of the city, still known as Tyskebryggen (the German Quay), no doubt the most famous locality within the confines of Bergen.

The halcyon days of the German Quay date from the latter half of the fourteenth to the latter half of the sixteenth century, during which period the industrial life of the city was entirely in the hands of the Germans, who monopolized the fishing trade, draining Bergen of its economic resources, and making the city feel the heaviness of their commercial yoke. Yet the foreign community was in many respects so curious that it left an indelible stamp upon the city for generations after their sway had been broken for ever. The business community of Bergen adopted to no small extent a number of the Hansa business methods, just as its leading Norwegian members established themselves on the German Quay. Thereby a tradition was created which since the beginning of the present century has been raised to a municipal axiom, as it were. The rule laid down was that new buildings on or around the German Quay should all be built in conformity with the ancient houses, so as to recall as much as possible this particular part of the city, as it was built originally.



Photo

Underwood Press Service, London

OLD BERGEN

Some of the old timbered warehouses for which Bergen has been famous since the days of the Hanseatic League.

The Seven Mountains

In this way it has happened that notwithstanding the many heavy fires which in the course of centuries have devastated the German Quay and its immediate vicinity, and destroyed for ever a number of curious relics from the Hansa period, the Quay itself still stands out a precious memory to the citizens of Bergen and to all admirers of her dramatic history.

The Bergen Exchange Committee, with a historical sense worthy of appreciation many years ago, had an exact model made of an old German Quay, which can at present be seen at the Bergen Museum, by the way, one of the finest institutions of its kind in Norway. No foreign visitor to Bergen should fail to see this remarkable replica ; nor should he leave the city without paying a visit to the Hanseatic Museum on the German Quay, where he will find the most complete picture on record of the Hansa time, a perfect reconstruction of the joint shop and house of a Hansa tradesman of the fifteenth century, with all its curious outfits and implements.

The national growth of Norway in the seventeenth and eighteenth century reveals itself to a marked degree in Bergen, which, after having thrown off the foreign yoke, developed into a community so typically local, and at the same time so heterogeneous, as can be found nowhere else in Norway. It follows as a matter of course that Bergen could retain her exclusive position only so long as Christiania and East Norway had not yet become the central part of the country,

Bergen, or the City amidst

and the seat of the administration ; but notwithstanding the memorable events of 1814, which made Bergen become the second city of the kingdom, she did not cease to stand out an exponent of national energy and progress in the most different fields.

In Norway of the nineteenth century the name of Bergen is intimately associated with the foundation of the steamship trade on a modern scale ; in the field of dramatic art it is no less intimately associated with the foundation of the "National Stage," still the official name of the Bergen Theatre ; in politics her representatives have always been among the most prominent members of the Storting. But in the midst of all this activity she remained, what she had always been, an exclusive community with queer local customs and traditions, old-fashioned looking houses and a business centre with an intricate net of narrow streets.

One evening in January, 1916, a tremendous fire, fanned by a storm of extraordinary violence, swept away most of the central part of the city, and involved losses estimated approximately at £1,100,000. The effects of this fire have materially affected the appearance of Bergen.

"Bergen is at its best in the spring," says a local author. "The air is then generally sparkingly clear ; the heavens are high, the sea is blue and the wind fresh. . . . But Bergen is beautiful in the summer too, when veils of mist lie like strips of wool along the slopes of

The Seven Mountains

the mountains, when the air is heavy, soft, and loaded with moisture." This is the season of the year in which the majority of foreign tourists make the acquaintance of Bergen, or get a glimpse of it, for, as a rule, the visit is a very short one. But those who can afford time for a little longer stay will certainly not repent of it, for in no place in Norway are ancient memories and richly varied natural surroundings more brightly reflected than in the lively Bergen temper. Even a foreigner who does not understand the language will not fail to be impressed by this trait, which reveals itself so splendidly in a local hymn, "I took my just-tuned Cither in Hand," which, for more than a century, has been the "National Anthem" of Bergen, and which is sung with unabated enthusiasm on festival occasions.

As an evidence of what we will call the festival of Bergen, no building in the city is more famous than the Haakons-Hallen (Haakon's Hall). This building, which is situated on the premises of the Fortress of Bergenhus, was begun by King Haakon Haakonsson in 1247, and completed during the subsequent twelve to thirteen years. In 1261 it is mentioned in connection with festivities on the occasion of a royal marriage, and after a fire in 1266 it is again mentioned as restored in 1280, when it was used for festivities on the occasion of a royal coronation. The Haakon's Hall, which was primarily a banqueting hall, is an oblong rectangular building in late Gothic

Bergen, or the City amidst

style, constructed of quarry stones with steatite sets and ornaments, unique of its kind in the Northern Countries, but with parallels in England. The building has two floors and a basement, and the large banqueting hall runs through its whole length. Disgraced for centuries like the Trondhjem Cathedral and the Fortress of Akershus—among other things this royal banqueting hall was used as a granary—the decay of the Haakon's Hall was one of the chief evidences of the decay of Norway. As a consequence the national resurrection of Norway in the nineteenth century was comparatively soon followed by the demand for the restoration of the Haakon's Hall to its former splendour. It was not, however, until in the seventies that the actual restoration of the building was initiated, and in our own time the hall has been splendidly decorated. As it stands now, awaiting only some historical event worthy of its most glorious tradition, the Haakon's Hall is the pride of Bergen, which no foreign visitor should fail to see.

Not far from the Haakon's Hall, likewise in the Fortress of Bergenshus, is the Walkendorf Tower, commenced in the thirteenth century, but only completed in its present form in the sixteenth century by Erik Rosenkrantz, a Danish nobleman; who was commander of the Fortress of Bergenshus about 1560, and after whom the Tower is also called the Rosenkrantz Tower. Rosenkrantz as well as Walkendorf, who also was Commander of the Fortress, were both

The Seven Mountains

energetic men, who, notwithstanding their foreign origin adopted the cause of the Bergen townsmen as their own, and put a final stop to the Hanseatic encroachments. From the Tower there is a splendid view over the city and the harbour.

A foreigner on his way through the city should certainly also stop at the Bergen Fishmarket, which is justly known as one of the most interesting and lively markets in Northern Europe. Nowhere are the typical Bergen temper and Bergen humour displayed more freely than here. Overlooking the place from the top of his monument, Ludvig Holberg the famous eighteenth-century author and the greatest son of Bergen up to this day, leaning upon his walking-stick, seems to smile at this scene of abounding vivacity with its variety of characters which stand out so strikingly in his comedies.

“Quaint and ever young like thy Holberg’s humour.”

These are the words in which the great national poet Björnson so strikingly has summed up his description of Bergen in a fine poem. Nothing better has ever been said of the city. But it should always be remembered that this city so intimately human, thanks to the energy and vitality of its population, is surrounded by an extremely varied nature which is the delight of the inhabitants, and which can be reached at a minimum of time. In fact, no city or town in Norway has an easier access to the realm of

Bergen, or the City amidst

nature than Bergen, and nowhere more splendid results stand out than those achieved during the last few generations through the energetic efforts of the Bergen Tree Planting Society, initiated by a Bergen citizen, Ole Irgens, to whom a commemoration stone has been erected in the midst of the realm of nature to the beauty of which he has devoted so much of his care and energy. The whole is a practical illustration of the famous commandment issued by the national poet and pioneer Henrik Wergeland of "clothing the rock," which is the watch-word of tree-planting in Norway, and to which Bergen has been particularly alive.

Bergen has one drawback, which there is no reason to conceal. It rains more abundantly in this city than in any other city or town in Norway—a fact which is humorously expressed in the saying that at Bergen it rains three hundred and sixty days in the year, and is not fair weather in the remaining five days. People in East Norway do not restrain from their smiles at all this wetness. But the Bergen people do not mind.

Whether all the seven mountains by which the city is surrounded are hidden by clouds covering them like waterproofs, and whether the waterproofs are thrown off in a fit of impatience, as it were, as the rays of the sun suddenly gleam over the peaks, people of Bergen put up and put down their umbrellas—the most frequent form for a walking-stick—with the same equanimity and good humour.



Photo

Ilse

TELEMARK STABBURS OR PROVISION HOUSES

These are used as store-houses, and are of considerable age. They are admirably adapted to the rigorous conditions of this beautiful valley.

The Seven Mountains

It is this happy mixture of common sense and shrewd reflection which is the charm of the Bergen temper, and imbued as it is with a humorous vein nourished by the very whims of nature, it affords an additional attraction to a Bergen visit.

CHAPTER VII

WEST NORWAY

THERE was a time—only a generation ago—when East and West Norway were mentioned as two entirely different parts of the country with no intermediate connecting link. The charming districts described in the fifth chapter of this volume as the Sörland had not yet got their area marked by fixed limits, and as a consequence West Norway did not mean exactly the same then as it means now. At that time West Norway was officially described as covering the coast districts from Lindesnes (the Naze) to the mouth of the Trondhjemsfjord; at the present day the latter place still constitutes the northern frontier of West Norway, whereas the southern frontier has been removed as far north as the districts in the immediate vicinity of Stavanger. We mention this fact more as an item of geographical interest to a foreign visitor than as a point which is likely to strike him, as seen from the deck of a steamer or from a railway compartment; for, broadly speaking, nature has a typical West Norway character all along from Christianssand to Stavanger, with the only exception of that of Jæren—a district so essentially different from all other districts in this



Photo

ALONG THE COAST OF SOUTHERN NORWAY

Within the "Skjærgaard," or belt of barren islets, lie sheltered waters along the coast known as "Sorlandet."

West Norway

country that it is well worth a description of its own.

Fancy a part of Norway with a coast-line of some forty miles or more, not steep and rugged as is generally the case, but low and sandy, constituting a connected beach up from which there stretches "a poor greyish land, with heather-brown hills and pale moors, strewn with mighty boulders," to quote a famous description by Arne Garborg (1851-1925), a highly gifted author who, in prose and poetry, has paid his tribute to Jæren, his native district, in works of remarkable force and beauty. The mighty forests of East Norway are here entirely absent, although, judging from enormous roots in the grounds, they are known to have existed down to a comparatively modern age, and for miles and miles no trees rise against the sky, except those planted by the hands of man for the purpose of sheltering the growing crop. One also looks in vain for the commanding ridges of the West Norway mountain plateau. There is nothing of all this. From the glittering sea far out in the west to the low ridges barring the sight towards the east, the Jæren presents the appearance of an undulating heath, interrupted by green fields, minor lakes and ponds—a realm of nature "where the hare flees from boulder to boulder and all sorts of brown-speckled wild fowl lie in their hidden nests winking and dozing."

Yet this is only one aspect of the Jæren; the other aspect is the Jæren, such as it has been

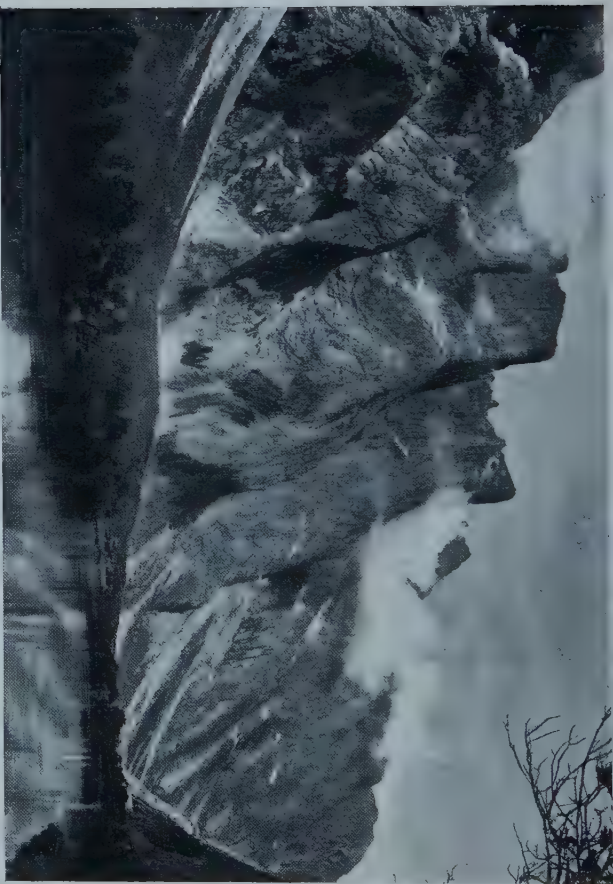
West Norway

transformed in the course of the last half a century or so by railway, telephone, electric light, and motor-cars through the efforts of a population in which a grave religious conception of life is to a remarkable degree combined with a worldly energy and cleverness in the most varied fields of human activity.

It is the same spirit which reveals itself in the development of the ancient city of Stavanger, the leading place in this part of Norway, and the northern terminus of the Jæren Railway. No district in Norway is more intimately associated with the historical origin of the Norwegians as the Jæren. To the south of Stavanger the famous Hafrsfjord, mentioned in the second chapter of this volume as the birthplace of United Norway, penetrates from the sea amidst surroundings of a striking nature, while Stavanger itself has a history covering more than eight hundred years. Its fine cathedral, dating from the beginning of the twelfth century, and originally founded by Reinald, a Winchester monk, who subsequently became its first bishop, stands out as the most splendid church in Norway from the Middle Ages, second only to the Trondhjem Cathedral.

It is to the credit of the Stavanger clergy in the Catholic age that in spite of various disasters that in the course of time befell the cathedral, which was dedicated to St. Swithun, the famous bishop and patron saint of the Winchester Cathedral (d. A.D. 860), no effort was spared to maintain the noble traditions of the cathedral. But un-

Photo



Article

THE MAGNIFICENT TROLDTINDER

This is a famous row of peaks just opposite the Romsdalshorn. It is a sight which by itself would justify a visit to Norway.

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fortunately, here as elsewhere the decline and fall of Norway was synonymous with the decay of her most noble monuments. Through the Reformation the Stavanger Cathedral got her final doom, and in the latter half of the seventeenth century Stavanger was even deprived of its position as a diocesan city, whereby this ancient cathedral was reduced to the position of a mere parish church, although it never ceased to have a place of its own in the minds of the Stavanger population.

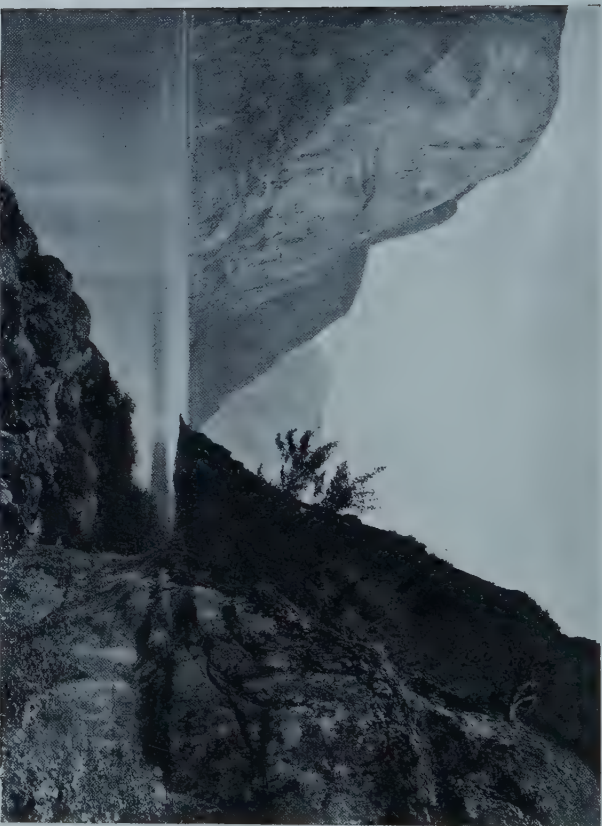
The rise and growth of Stavanger during the last hundred years, which constitutes a remarkably striking chapter of religious mission work and worldly enterprise, quite naturally was attended by a growing interest in the Cathedral, and in the summer of 1925 Stavanger, after an interval of nearly 250 years was again raised to the dignity of a diocesan city, with a bishop officially instituted as the primate of the Cathedral. Altogether Stavanger is well worth a visit, not least on account of the unique position in the field of the canning industry, which is founded at Stavanger and which in the course of the last thirty to forty years has made her name famous all over the world.

Farther north, about midway between Stavanger and Bergen we find ourselves in the famous herring district centring round Haugesund, which should especially be seen in early February, when the large *fat-herring* fisheries are in full swing, and the life and activity displayed all

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over the place present a picture to which the animation in the North Norway fishing places during the season of the large cod fishing affords the only adequate parallel. From a historical point of view the Haugesund district is justly famous. About a couple of miles to the north of the town was raised in 1872, a thousand years after the battle of the Hafsrfjord, a splendid national memorial in commemoration of the Unification of Norway by Harald Hairfair, who is supposed to have been buried here. It consists of a mighty granite block, more than 50 feet high, raised on a mound 15 feet high, and surrounded by thirty-one minor stones—the number of counties into which Norway was divided at the time. The memorial, which can be sighted from the sea in fair weather, should be seen from the countryside in a grey autumn day when the landscape, which reminds one of the Jæren—the sea roaring all along outside—is reflecting, as it were, the very grey-light of history.

The county of Rogaland, the ancient name of the district of Stavanger, which has been resumed since 1920, is not, however, known for historical traditions and its coast-line only. To the north and east of the city a bewildering number of islands and islets and corresponding number of sounds and fjords form a perfect archipelago until farthest east a ridge of mountains raise their snowy peaks against the sky. This district, which bears the name of Ryfylke, abounds in fantastic combinations of mountains and



Photo

W. H. H. H.

THE NÆRØFJORD (SOGN DISTRICT)

One of the most beautiful of the West Norway fjords.

West Norway

fjords, among which the Lysefjord affords the most striking example. It penetrates into the mountain ridge to a depth of no less than twenty-six miles, while on both sides the mountains are exceedingly high and steep, especially on the inner part of the fjord, where over a distance of about ten miles a ridge of mountains known as the Kjerag rises almost perpendicularly to the height of more than 2500 feet.

Notwithstanding the magnificent scenery of Ryfylke only a comparatively limited number of foreign tourists find their way to this part of the country, which, by the way, also affords an easy and highly interesting access to East Norway through the Telemark. The tourist high roads seem to be the fjords, popularly known as the West Norway fjords, which are all situated to the north of Bergen with the exception of the Hardangerfjord.

The latter is perhaps the most popular tourist fjord in Norway, with a charm of its own which makes former visitors return year after year, while new ones are following in their wake. The popularity of Hardanger—the general abbreviation of the word—is due no less to its being easy of approach than to its extremely varied natural scenery and to its exquisite climate. It has justly been said that travelling through Hardanger is like travelling through Norway—on a minor scale. All the characteristic features of Norwegian nature stand out strikingly in Hardanger. South and East Norway is represented by occasional

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woodland districts of a not inconsiderable extent; typical West Norway cascades fall down from mountains, the peaks of which have all the fantastic beauty of those of North Norway.

The grandest among the West Norway fjords are, however, the three fjords, Sognefjorden, Sunnfjord, and Nordfjord, where within a couple of days, thanks to a series of excellent communications, the traveller is able to traverse these districts which have justly been described as "a fairyland of narrow fjords, of steep, rugged mountains with foaming waterfalls, of picturesque landscapes, of enormous mountain plateaus with snow-clad peaks and glittering glaciers."

If that fairyland has a parallel it must be found at Sunnmör, immediately to the north of Nordfjord. The capital of Sunnmör is Aalesund, an energetic and enterprising fishing port, from the neighbourhood of which the famous viking Rollo, the ancestor of William the Conqueror, in 911 set out on the expedition which ended by the conquest of Normandy in France. But the true fame of Sunnmör, from a tourist point of view, is attached to the grand ridge of mountains to the south-east of Aalesund, popularly known as the "Sunnmör Alps."

It is difficult, if not to say impossible, to give an adequate idea of the fantastic irregularity of these mountains, the peaks of which seem to "flout the sky" with an exuberant variety of constantly surprising shapes. The waterfalls of Sunnmör, as they may be seen at Geiranger, one

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of the most imposing districts in Norway, have all the sublimity of unbounded nature. No sight is more majestic than these high cascades, which seem to fall down from the very sky; no beauty more dazzling than their filigree of silver streaks down the mountain sides. Yet all this is only one aspect of the Sunnmör nature. The other aspect, with which tourists never make the acquaintance, is Sunnmör in the autumn and winter tempests, when the Atlantic Ocean, "convulsed, dark heaving," unlooses all her rage in a gigantic onset against the coast, while the Sunnmör fishermen, famous all over Norway for their cool resolution in an emergency no less than for their consummate seamanship, generally are able to save their lives and crafts with remarkably few losses.

No less imposing than the "Sunnmör Alps" are the "Alps of Romsdalen," a series of mountains, among which Romsdalshorn and Trolldinderne stand out as two of the most famous in Norway.

The difference between the Sunnmör and the Romsdal Alps is that while the peaks of the former convey the idea of daring slenderness, the peaks of the latter convey a no less pronounced idea of supreme massiveness. Set like a pearl in these wonderful surroundings is the little town of Molde, where Björnson passed his school-days, and to which he has dedicated a poem in which he describes it as "the town of the flowers." The very same sight has inspired

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Ibsen in his characteristic play, "The Lady from the Sea."

At the bottom of the Romsdalsfjord is the little port of Aandalsnes, the terminus of the Rauma Railway, which was opened to traffic over its full length in the autumn of 1924. This railway line was constructed for the purpose of bringing the important fishing districts of Sunnmør into easy communication with the capital, and at the same time to serve as a preliminary link between West and North Norway pending a direct railway connection. The Rauma Railway joins the Gudbrandsdal Railway at the Dombaas junction, from which there is an unbroken broad-gauge railway line to Oslo.

The other line, which is known as the Dovre Railway, and which, from an engineering point of view, affords a fine parallel to the Bergen and the Rauma Railway, gradually rises to some 3000 feet, at which height it runs across the famous mountain plateau of Dovre. Looking out from the railway compartment on this imposing view one might imagine he was moving over a sea of petrified waves, dominated all the way by the lofty Snehætten (the *Snow-cap*), the white crest of which lines the sky at the height of more than 6,500 feet.

The track of the Dovre Railway, generally speaking, coincides with the traditional high road between South and North Norway. Even the names of the railway stations revive historical reminiscences, some of which are associated with



Photo

H. Ise

THE ROMSDAL VALLEY

To the right, in the background, is the famous Romsdalshorn. It is about 5200 feet in height and forms an exceptionally difficult climb.

West Norway

ski-ing, for which this part of the country affords excellent opportunities. From Opdal Station, on the other side of the mountain, the train gradually descends through the broad fertile Trondhjem Valley district, until eventually the ancient city of Trondhjem, the capital of North Norway, opens to the view.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CAPITAL OF NORTH NORWAY

NO city or town in Norway ranks higher in the mind of the nation than Trondhjem, or Nidaros as she was called in the Middle Ages, when she was, in fact, looked upon as the capital of the country. Nidaros—Trondhjem ! It comes like a flash across the centuries, revealing all the striking contrasts of the history of Norway.

Nidaros was founded in A.D. 997 by King Olav Trygvason, perhaps the most sympathetic figure in the ancient history of Norway, and at the same time the greatest all-round sportsman of his age. The little place which he founded at the “os” (mouth) of the Nidar River, after which the city was named, only forms an inconsiderable part of the extensive area of modern Trondhjem, which the ancient king overlooks from the top of the high column raised to the honour of the founder of the city at the very centre of the traffic, and presented to the municipality by a private citizen. There is reason to suppose that the population of Nidaros in the Middle Ages never exceeded 2500 inhabitants ; but as the national centre of the civilization and education which had for its outward symbol the splendid Cathedral, dedicated to Saint Olav, the patron saint of Norway, Nidaros had an importance far beyond



Photo

Wilse

THE SEVEN SISTERS WATERFALL

The most impressive sight on the grand Geiranger Fjord, West Norway. The only place in the world where such a sight may be enjoyed from the deck of a large tourist steamer.

The Capital of North Norway

her limited number of inhabitants. Broadly speaking it may be said that from a spiritual as well as from an economic point of view Nidaros in those days was stamped by English influence to a remarkable degree.

When the Royal House of Haafagre became extinct in the beginning of the fourteenth century Nidaros was at the acme of her importance as a national centre. The grand Cathedral, the foundation of which dates from about A.D. 1075, and which, since 1152, had been presided over by an archbishop, had now, through constant enlargements and embellishments, reached a state of perfection and beauty which made its name resound over Europe, and added to the reputation of the city.

The subsequent decline and fall of Norway, between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century, which coincides painfully with the decline of Nidaros, is nowhere more obvious than in the simultaneous disfiguration and decay of the Cathedral. Visited by disastrous fires in 1328, 1432, and 1531, the Cathedral was already pitifully reduced when in 1536, through the official introduction of the Lutheran Reformation, it was divested of the last rest of its former importance by being further reduced from a national sanctuary to a local parish church. Two more fires, in 1708 and in 1719 respectively, added to the work of destruction, so that the Cathedral was in a very bad condition, indeed, when in 1869 the Storting decided that the ancient

The Capital of North Norway

Cathedral should undergo a complete restoration worthy of its unique place in the history of the nation. This work of restoration, which has been carried on ever since, constitutes a chapter entirely distinct from the history of Trondhjem during the same period, but at the same time highly interesting from a cultural point of view.

In the sixteenth century the name of Trondhjem, originally the name of the adjacent districts, began to supersede the ancient name of Nidaros, and since then the new name has been adopted officially as well as privately. It is not, however, unlikely that the city one day will resume her ancient name, as there is already a rather strong feeling in favour of it. Be this at it may the, history of Trondhjem from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century need not detain us long. It may be sufficient to state that the economic revival of the city dates from the latter half of the seventeenth century, and that during this period a devastating fire (1681) practically swept Ancient Nidaros out of existence and paved the way for the foundation of Modern Trondhjem, the central part of which strikes every visitor by her exceedingly broad streets, and the number of her mansion-like buildings, especially in the immediate neighbourhood of the Cathedral, all evidences of the cultural and economic independence of Trondhjem in the eighteenth century.

Among these buildings may chiefly be mentioned the Stiftsgaarden (County Mansion), a typically



Photo

Mittet

PRÆKESTOLEN (THE PULPIT)

A strange formation on the north side of the Nevraadals Fjeld (mountain) in the district of Ryfylke which abounds in magnificent scenery.

The Capital of North Norway

fine specimen of eighteenth-century architecture, and at the same time the largest wooden building in Norway. Since 1906 the Stiftsgarden, which is associated with the most memorable events in the modern history of the city, is the official residence of the King when he is visiting Trondhjem. In this building King Haakon and Queen Maud, after their coronation in the Cathedral (July 22, 1906), received the congratulations of their royal guests, including the Prince of Wales (afterwards George V) and a number of other people of high rank. It is an event of historical interest, the more so as, by an amendment to the Constitution in 1908, the section bearing upon "the coronation and the anointing of the King in the Cathedral of Trondhjem," which had been valid since 1814, was abrogated, and thereby the coronation of 1906 will stand out as being the last one in this country.

The national resurrection of Norway in 1814 quite naturally also gave an impetus to the economic growth of Trondhjem, although for a number of years the development took place on a very limited scale. Yet there was no reason to despair of the future of the city. Owing to her excellent situation in the centre of large districts where agriculture, cattle-breeding, mining, and fishing industries were occupations of a very old standing, Trondhjem was bound to become an important import and export centre, as soon as she came within the influence of modern means of communication. It is not, therefore, by chance

The Capital of North Norway

that the economic growth within the last few generations is the contemporaneous development of the Norwegian traffic system. Trondhjem is no longer a distant place, overshadowed by the traditions of the past and about to be left behind in the competition. On the contrary, she has developed into the vigorous capital of North Norway, the connecting link between the northern and the southern part of the country, and last, but not least, the energetic co-operator in the national work of unification, popularly known as the Nordland Railway.

It is impossible within a brief space to give an adequate idea of this important work, the history of which covers a period of fully half a century, while the railway itself, which has been opened by sections from Trondhjem northward, is at present being built through the northern part of the North Trondhjem County. This means that years will pass before the Nordland Railway reaches the actual frontiers of the county of Nordland, and that as a consequence it is futile to make any conjectures as to its completion further northward. But nevertheless it is closely bound up with the development of Trondhjem, to which every section of railway line opened northward means an additional strengthening of her position as the capital of North Norway and the site of the only Technical High School of the country.

Highly interesting as Trondhjem is in itself as an historic city, she is within easy reach of a number of places famous in the ancient history



Photo

Realistic Travels, London

OIE

The beautiful Norang Valley, enclosed by ranges of mountains of Alpine ruggedness.

The Capital of North Norway

of Norway. In her immediate vicinity there are several points to which excursions may easily be arranged, and which afford scenery well worth seeing. The general character of nature round Trondhjem conveys an idea of sternness rather than of intimacy, which anticipates the grandeur of the North Norway scenery, while at the same time the remarkable broadness of the fjord and of the valley explains the history and psychology of the population. From time immemorial the "Trönder," by which is understood a native of Trondhjem and the Trondhjem districts, has found himself in larger surroundings than the majority of his countrymen, and at the same time in surroundings which, although remote, were favoured by nature and admitted of fairly easy conditions of life. Thereby the "Trönder" was able to develop an economic and cultural independence which, in connection with his hospitality, has stood the test of time and won him general respect.

"It needs a bullet to put a Trönder out of action," runs a saying which is famous all over Norway. It sums up concisely the chief characteristics of this population whose views and opinions are to a remarkable degree sifted through the medium of personal reflection, and who sticks to them with a tenacity which admits of no compromise. In these circumstances it is easy to explain why conservatism is never more conservative and radicalism never more radical than at Trondhjem.

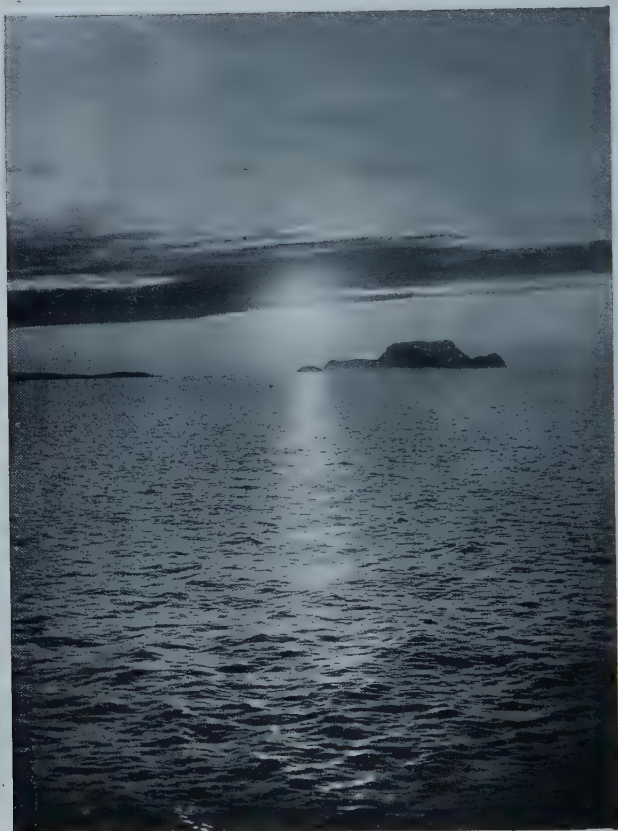
CHAPTER IX

NORTH NORWAY

THE term *Nord Norge* (North Norway) is generally applied to the part of Norway roughly extending from the sixty-fourth to the seventy-first degree of latitude, and embraces the counties of Nordland, Troms, and Finmark. It covers an area of about one-fourth of the kingdom, with a population which constitutes about 12 per cent of the aggregate population of Norway.

For centuries this interesting part of Norway, whence more than a thousand years ago the first sailor-merchants hoisted their sails for England, carrying with them fish and furs and returning with cloths, honey, and other articles, was considered as outside the limits of civilization, and even yet it is not nearly so well known as it deserves to be to the majority of the Norwegian nation. To the foreign tourist, who only sees the coast of North Norway in the wonderful summer when for months the sun is above the horizon during the whole twenty-four hours, the country is somewhat of a fairyland filled with an overwhelming variety of magnificent scenery vying with each other in beauty and grandeur.

It is North Norway which has bestowed upon



Photo

Walse

THE MIDNIGHT SUN |

Although bright as daylight, the midnight sun has a mysterious beauty of its own. The slight haziness which accompanies it adds greatly to its charm and, moreover, does not prevent reading or any of the occupations of daytime.

North Norway

Norway the famous title of "the land of the midnight sun"; but it ought, at once, to be understood that this expression must not be taken too literally. South Norway, notwithstanding her wonderful summer nights full of light and beauty and, by midsummer-time, with a hardly perceptible transition from night to day, is never illuminated by the midnight sun. This consummation of sublimity on the part of nature has been reserved for North Norway, and even here, owing to the extensive area of the country, the midnight sun does not remain above the horizon for the same amount of time. At Bodö, for instance, the chief town in the county of Nordland, the midnight sun is visible from the beginning of June towards the middle of July; at Tromsö, the central town in the county of Troms, from the third week of May to the last week of July, while at the North Cape the midnight sun season covers the period from the middle of May to the beginning of August; but notwithstanding these local variations, the light prevails. Night becomes day throughout the summer. Children play outside the houses at midnight. People go to see their friends in the small hours.

In the winter, of which season the average tourist has no idea, the sun is away for weeks or months—at Bodö for a fortnight, at Tromsö for six weeks, at the North Cape from the latter half of November to the latter half of January. The darkness, too, prevailing during this period, when the sun remains below the horizon for twenty-four

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hours consecutively—generally called the “dark time”—must not, however, be taken too literally. Notwithstanding this ominous term there is a comparatively fair proportion of light in reserve for the people of North Norway, and even on the most gloomy days their experiences are eclipsed by the black and foggy experiences of Londoners when London is at her worst.

Yet all this only conveys a very inadequate idea of North Norway. Those who wish to study this remarkable part of the country a little more closely should always bear in mind that the rugged coast-line, seen from the steamer for days and nights surrounded by all the splendour of the arctic summer and the no less fantastic beauty of the Arctic winter, is only an outer shell, as it were. North Norway fascinates men's mind by the impressiveness of her scenery, and no one who has felt himself under the spell of this world of beauty will fail to retain an indelible remembrance of it. But even the deepest impression of North Norway does not necessarily imply any closer acquaintance with her. The reason is easy to find. North Norway is exhibiting her natural attractions more liberally than she is disclosing her material assets; that is the reason why she is still more enthusiastically admired than duly appreciated.

It is hardly an exaggeration to describe North Norway as a marvel of nature. Her extraordinary dimensions which completely upset all southern ideas of distances; her bewildering number of fjords



Photo

W. H. C.

A FISHING STATION—LOFOTEN ISLANDS

The drying of cod and its export to the Mediterranean countries has for many centuries been one of the chief Norwegian industries.

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and islands ; her endless range of mountain peaks reflecting their fantastic shapes in the deep blue mirror of the sea ; her sheltered waters for miles and miles which admit of undisturbed admiration of all this beauty, further intensified by a marvellous variety of tints, and, finally, the mid-summer sun throwing, as has justly been said, " a legendary halo over the whole region "—all this makes a tour to North Norway an entrancing adventure. It need hardly be said that there is a mighty contrast between North Norway in the summer and North Norway in the winter, and it would be unthinkable that all the extravagances in which fanciful nature seems to indulge in these regions should not have had a moulding influence upon the character of the population ; yet too much importance must not be attached to it.

The " Nordlæding "—the general term for a man from North Norway—is not primarily a mere product of the natural surroundings and conditions in which he finds himself, such as he has too often been described in works of fiction. He may rather be characterized as a man gifted with a strong will and an inventive brain, bent on turning his surroundings to the best account to suit his requirements. The ordinary Nordlæding, contrary to the majority of his South Norway countrymen, cannot afford to stick to one profession. He has to perform the duties of a peasant, of a fisherman, and of some artisans. As a consequence, he has to feel at home not only in his boat, but in the field, and in the forest. The

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striking feature of his character is one of alertness, and although, as a rule, he is unable to foresee his opportunity, he is remarkably clever to seize it at the right moment and to turn it to account. Add to this his geographical horizon is enlarged through extensive fishing expeditions along the coasts from the North Sea to the White Sea, as well as to the Spitsbergen and Iceland waters, and no one will wonder that the Nordlanding is a man more intimately acquainted with the conditions of life in this extensive country than most of his South Norway compatriots.

The overwhelming part of the North Norway population is dependent upon the fishing trade, the average number of fishermen in the counties of Nordland, Troms and Finmark being estimated at 165 per thousand inhabitants, or 55 per cent of all bread-winners. As to the fisheries themselves, they are chiefly concentrated in the part of the Nordland county known as the Lofoten Islands and off the coast of Finmark.

It is a pity that the great cod fisheries at Lofoten, generally carried on from the latter half of January to the beginning of April, have not yet become one of the North Norway tourist attractions, for, thanks to the present excellent steamship communications, and with the sun rising higher and higher week by week, a tour to North Norway in the winter—we speak from personal experience—has no terrors. We should rather say that it has somewhat of a double attraction. It is difficult to choose between the North Norway

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summer and North Norway winter with the beauties displayed by either ; but in one respect those of the winter season prevail. It shows us not only the silent beauty of nature, but the busy activity of man.

The North Norway cod fisheries, in comparison with which the herring fisheries of North Norway are of minor importance, are due to the annual migrations of the cod. Every year in the early winter months millions and millions of cod are shoaling through the depths of the Atlantic towards the coast of Norway for the purpose of spawning. For more than a thousand years the population along the west and north coast of Norway has turned this phenomenon to account, and gradually developed the cod fisheries until now they have become one of the most important trades of the nation. Accordingly, nowhere does the influence of the cod fisheries so deeply affect the daily conditions of life as in North Norway. Simultaneously with the cod making for the waters of the Lofoten and the adjacent Vester-aalen Islands as their centre, thousands of fishermen from all parts of the three North Norway counties, as well as a great number of fishermen along the coast as far down as to the districts between Bergen and Stavanger, are leaving for the North Norway fishing districts. It is estimated that some thirty to forty thousand fishermen, with seven to eight thousand boats, within recent years to a great extent supplied with auxiliary engines, annually arrive at Lofoten during the fishing

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season. The life which simultaneously displays itself at Svolvær, the natural centre of this activity, and in the neighbouring Kabelvaag, both pushing places, is a sight not easily to be forgotten.

Without entering into details upon this subject, on which it would be easy to write a not inconsiderable number of pages, it may be sufficient to point out that the fishing generally takes place by means of "lines" or by "nets." The lines which are placed at the bottom of the sea have an average length of some 2000 yards; they are strong and heavy and have 1200-2000 baited hooks attached to them by a leader, a fathom in length, attached to the fishing line. In order to trace the whereabouts of the lines, their ends are indicated by a strong line, which is lowered to the bottom by a heavy sinker, while the top of the line is resting on the surface of the water supported by floats, very often supplied with a little standard.

Nothing is more astonishing to outsiders than the never-failing cleverness of the fishermen in tracing the whereabouts of their lines, not rarely several miles out at sea; the secret of it is, however, that the lines are lowered upon estimates of distances from the coast, the position of some mountain or island in one direction of the other, etc.—in short, on the basis of an intimate knowledge of the localities acquired in the course of generations. The same knowledge also displays itself in the ease with which the fishermen who are using nets—generally consisting

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of thirty to forty in number, known as a "garn-lænke" (chain of nets)—are able to trace their whereabouts in the sea. The "garn-lænke," as well as the lines, are drawn up in the morning. At sunrise the Government Superintendent, a temporary authority appointed for the fishing season, and, in fact, superseding the ordinary authorities, raises a signal, and the whole fishing fleet leaves the port for their various fishing places. It is an impressive sight which retains its place in the memory.

From Lofoten the fishermen at the end of the season, generally after a short visit home, leave for Finmark, where the cod-fishing season lasts from the middle of April towards the middle of June. Strange to say the Lofoten fishermen meet the Lofoten cod again at the fishing places in Finmark, to which the cod, which successfully escape the dangers of lines and nets, immediately proceed after having spawned at Lofoten. This remarkable fact has been proved by the marking of a great number of cod, caught at Lofoten and subsequently dropped into the sea for the purpose of tracing their migrations. It is on record, on the basis of experiments within recent years, that no less than 30 per cent of the cod caught and dropped out again at Lofoten have been caught once more in Finmark before the end of the season.

As it will appear from this brief outline of the conditions of life in North Norway, the "dark time" is, in fact, the time of the year in which the

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population is most busy. This does not imply, however, that the Nordlænder has nothing to do during the rest of the year ; but it is so difficult to get a comprehensive survey of this work, owing to the enormous distances over which it is being carried on. Yet foreign visitors to North Norway should always bear in mind that behind the range of mountains lining the coasts for miles and miles there are fertile fields and pastures, extensive forests of pines and firs, rich iron ore deposits, rivers which will meet the requirements of the most enthusiastic salmon fishers, and last but not least, splendid waterfalls of untold powers, of which so far only a fraction has been harnessed for industrial purposes.

It is all these assets which the Nordlænder hopes to turn to account one day through the medium of the Nordland Railway.



Photo

THE TOWN OF SVOLVÆR LOFOTEN

The "Capital" of the famous Lofoten district in which the great cod fisheries are concentrated.

Mittet

CHAPTER X

FARTHEST NORTH

THE general description of North Norway contained in the previous chapter, although here and there bearing upon Finmark, chiefly has reference to the counties of Nordland and Troms, which practically constitute a connected whole both as to scenery and conditions of life. On the other hand, the Finmark, in several respects, holds a position which necessitates its being dealt with in a chapter of its own.

A glance at the map shows us that the county of Finmark constitutes not only the most northern part of Norway, but the most northern part of the Continent of Europe. In size the Finmark is the largest of all Norwegian counties, and its proportions as an administrative part of Norway may be realized from the fact that it is some three thousand square miles larger than Switzerland; on the other hand, it is the most thinly populated county in Norway, averaging not even two persons to the square mile. It is an evidence of the remoteness of the Finmark that during the Middle Ages this vast territory did not even constitute an integral part of the kingdom of Norway, but was regarded as a sort of tributary country where the kings of Norway, chiefly through their

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North Norwegian chieftains whom they commissioned to raise the "Finn tax," more or less successfully tried to enforce their will on the distant natives, so entirely different from the Norwegians proper.

The aborigines of Finmark are the "Lapps" or "Finns," as they rightly were called through the greater part of the history of Norway, just as their country was called Finmark, residence of the Finns. In Sweden these people were called "Lapps"—most likely a nickname invented by foreigners. But this did not prevent it from gradually conquering a place even in the Norwegian language in which, during the course of the nineteenth century, it became a term in ordinary conversation as well as in literature and in official documents.

As just mentioned, the Lapps who linguistically belong to the Finno-Ugrian group of peoples, very early became tributaries to the kings of Norway, and at a later date to Russia and subsequently to Sweden. By the middle of the thirteenth century the earliest Norwegian settlers took up their abode in Finmark, where the Lapps had led their nomadic life from time immemorial. About fifty years later (1307) the foundation of the still existing Fortress of Vardöhus established beyond doubt the intention of the Norwegian kings to maintain their grip on Finmark, and although this fortress has never been besieged it has been somewhat of a symbol of Norwegian sovereignty in the Farthest North.



Photo

Everett-11 Use

A FISHING STATION IN LOFOTEN

Note the distinctly Viking type of the fishing boats.

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The many rivalries between the Dano-Norwegian monarchy on one side and Sweden and afterwards Russia on the other side over the county of Finmark, which fill up a not inconsiderable number of years between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, quite naturally proved detrimental to the interests of the Lapps; and it certainly did not contribute to improve their conditions that during the former half of the eighteenth century an immigrant tribe from Finland, the Quains, whose language and customs are entirely distinct both from the Lapps and from the Norwegians, began to settle in Finmark, whence they gradually spread to the county of Troms.

Notwithstanding this, the Lapps increased in number in both counties, and towards the middle of the nineteenth century (1845), when the Lapps and the Quains for the first time were included in the public census, there were roughly 6550 Lapps in the county of Finmark and 1700 Quains, as compared with 5900 Lapps and 900 Quains in the county of Troms. However, when the last census was taken, the number of Lapps and Quains in the Finmark was, respectively, 11,400 and 7400, and in the county of Troms 8700 and 3200. During the same period (1845-1920) the Norwegian population has increased from 4500 to 25,500 in the county of Finmark and from 24,500 to 78,900 in the county of Troms.

These figures, without which it is impossible to form an adequate idea of the relations between

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the three nationalities living side by side in the two most northern counties of Norway, prove in a convincing way the numerical superiority of the Norwegians, to say nothing of their superiority as a factor of civilization. In this connection it is of interest to point out that especially since 1910 the Norwegian language is spreading steadily among both the Lapps and the Quains; the latter are, in fact, dropping their language almost too willingly, unlike the former, who are sticking to theirs with a primitive tenacity.

One of the most obvious characteristics of the Lapps is their shortness of stature, the average height being about 5 feet for men and a little less for women. Their outward appearance certainly proves them to belong to the Mongolian race; but there is reason to question their "remarkable resemblance to the Chinese and Japanese," which some travellers enlarge upon. It may rather be said that the Lapps differ from these nations in some very essential points. Their eyes, which are set very deeply, are, as a rule, blue and grey, not black or brown, and their position is horizontal, not oblique as with the Mongolians; in the same way their hair, which is rather rich, is brown, frequently fair, rather black. The complexion is brown, and a little fairer in young persons. Their bodies are fairly well proportioned with the exception of the legs, which are short and not infrequently somewhat bandy. Accordingly the Lapps do not appear to advantage as soldiers, contrary to the



Photo

A LAPP IDYLL IN THE SUMMER TIME

A family enjoying the warmth and fragrance of the brief Arctic summer.

Wilse

Farthest North

Quains, who are of a medium height with well-developed muscles, generally fair with broad faces and a somewhat pale yellow complexion ; on the other hand, the Lapps make up for their military shortcomings by a more genial temper than the Quains, and a greater courtesy towards their superior. It is generally admitted that the Lapps as well as the Quains have benefited by the introduction of the general conscription, which, although established by the Constitution of 1814 for the rest of the county, was only extended to the three most northern counties of Norway in 1897 ; in any case this step on the part of the State Authorities seems to have added to the importance of the Norwegian element in the Farthest North, and thereby to have strengthened its position to no small extent.

At the present date the mutual position of the three nationalities living side by side in Finmark may be generally described as follows : The intermediate link between the Norwegians and the Lapps in the development of Finmark is the Quains, being forged by the somewhat frequent marriages between Quains and Norwegians, and Quains and Lapps, whereas Norwegian-Lappish marriages are of rare occurrence. Accordingly, the Lapps who in Norway are generally divided in three groups—"River-Lapps," "Sea-Lapps," and "Mountain-Lapps"—are actually engaged in a constantly more difficult struggle for existence as a distinct nationality.

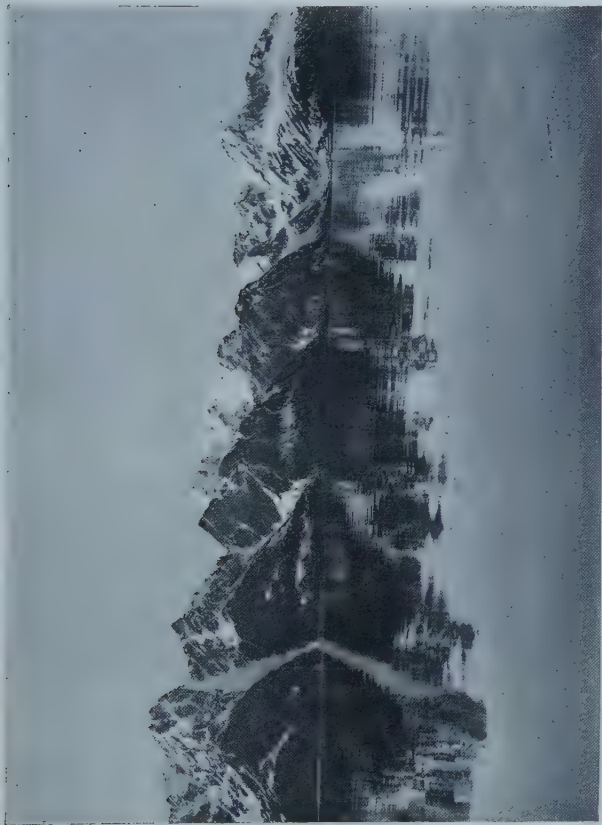
The River-Lapps mostly live in the districts

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of Karasjok and Kautokeino, in the depth of the vast Finmark plateau. They are chiefly leading the life of fishermen, fishing in the rivers and lakes, which are remarkably rich in salmon and trout; others are hunters and owners of some reindeer, living in different places, according to the season of the year; others again may be said to have practically given up their nomadic habits, and to have settled as cattle breeders. The Norwegian River-Lapps are to no small extent mixed up with the Quains, and apart from their language and their clothing, there is, in fact, very little about them to remind one of the Lapps.

The Sea-Lapps, who live as fishermen and farmers along the coast of Finmark, present a number of different stages of civilization, from primitive Lappish to modern Norwegian. The poorest and most retrograde among the Sea-Lapps live in mud huts, known as "gammer," consisting of a skeleton of birch-poles covered by a layer of turf. In the middle of the room is the fire-place, and just above there is a hole in the roof serving the purpose of a chimney. The whole picture is one of poverty and distress, only surpassed by that of the so-called "joint-gamms," where people and cattle live together in one room. It ought to be added, however, that the latter are now very few in number. On the other hand, some of the Sea-Lapps living along the coasts are so well off as to be owners of motor vessels with which they take their share in the fisheries.

The most characteristic of their tribe are, how-



Photo

LYNGENFJORD

One of the chief attractions of North Norway, with its unique series of glaciers.

Walse

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ever, the "Mountain-Lapps." They are the true bearers of Lapp traditions, the guardians of their ancient customs and habits—in short, the representatives of a stage of civilization which has not altered very much since the first taming of the reindeer. The Arab and his camel are not more closely connected than are the Lapp and his reindeer, and in an emergency in the midst of the sand storms of the desert the best qualities of the former two are not more splendidly displayed than are the qualities of the latter two in the midst of the blizzards of snow, sweeping over the white areas in the interior of the Finmark.

Here Nature rules unchallenged, as she has ruled for centuries—grand, weird in her displays of beauty as in her exhibitions of rage, the elements being transformed into ghosts and mysteries by the imagination of the primitive Lapp. In these surroundings he feels himself at home as nowhere else, and clad in his fur-clothing, known as "pæsk," and about to enter his "pulk," a little sledge which bears a remarkable resemblance to a flat-bottomed boat, drawn by a reindeer, he is prepared for any emergency. The dazzling sunshine over the enormous snow-fields in the early spring days does not make him forget his natural caution; nor does he allow himself to be deceived by all the silent beauty of the winter night, when the aurora borealis, which in Finmark is a perfect revelation of colours, illuminates the sky with a curtain of multi-

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coloured rays, suggesting a connected whole. He knows by experience that this luminous curtain, with its fantastic forms, may be torn to pieces by a sudden whim of nature. He is always on the alert, and, accordingly, never taken by surprise.

Is it to be wondered at that in the interior of this enormous county "everything is as in the days of our viking ancestors," as a Norwegian author wrote some years ago? Certainly not. The development of Finmark as an integral part of Norway could, in fact, only be initiated in the nineteenth century with its marvellous development in the field of communications. It is no exaggeration to say that the work performed in Finmark, during the last hundred years, for the benefit of this distant part of the country is highly to the credit of the State Authorities, considering the limited financial power of Norway, and the extremely difficult natural conditions of the Finmark. These conditions, quite naturally, are most pronounced in the interior of Finmark, where, accordingly, the results achieved may seem comparatively unimportant. On the other hand, the industrial and educational progress of the coast districts has been enormous, although it is easy to see that it has been performed at the expenditure of great energy and large capital.

Let us take a tour along the coast of Finmark on board one of the regular mail steamers to get a glimpse of the transformation of this province.

At the outset there is practically no difference between the nature of the county of Troms and



Photo

Wilse

THE NORTH CAPE

Access to the Hornuiken Bay in the foreground, is by a steep path leading from the plateau. The cape was given its name by English seamen rounding the north coast of Norway in the sixteenth century.

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of the county of Finmark; the latter begins at the Kvenangenfjord, from which it extends along the Arctic Ocean to a length of some three hundred and sixty miles, exclusive of the fjords, wild peaks, and glaciers. Two of these glaciers have a joint area of some twenty-three square miles, and lie between Tromsö and Hammerfest, the capital of West Finmark.

This characteristic little place is not only the most northern town of Norway, but, in fact, the most northern town in the world. Its town charter dates from 1787, but its development as a modern town coincides with the economic growth of Finmark in the nineteenth century, of which it constitutes an integral part. At the present date Hammerfest is the centre of the many expeditions which year after year go sealing and fishing in the Arctic waters, and a numerous fleet of steam and motor vessels is owned here. Another point of interest may be mentioned that in 1891, owing to a big fire in the preceding year, Hammerfest, which never had been able to defray the costs of gas works, set to work on the construction of an electric plant, whereby it became the first town not only in Norway, but in the world, which reached this advanced stage of illumination without the intermediate stage of gas.

To the north-east of Hammerfest the mighty plateau of Finmark appears in all its solitary sternness. The nearest and at the same time the most famous point is the North Cape, the natural

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terminus of a number of tourist expeditions to the Far North. By its striking appearance the North Cape, which rises like a mighty barrier above the sea, is worthy of her popularity among tourists of all nations, and it, therefore, does not matter very much that the most northern point of Norway is, in fact, the Knivskjærødden (Knife-edge Promontory), a mile further to the north. Nothing is like the North Cape when, on a winter's day, all the unbound fury of the Arctic Ocean roars against it, or when, on a silent night in the early spring, its mighty contours are illuminated by the flashings of the aurora borealis; but, above all, the North Cape should be seen in the full splendour of the midnight sun, when the Arctic Ocean, without a wrinkle on her "azure brow," extends like a mighty mirror as far as the horizon can be measured by the eye.

The traveller now finds himself in the Östhav (East Sea), the popular name of the waters between Hammerfest and Vardö. Along the whole coast of Norway there is nothing so stern and desolate as this coast-line, which rises steep and wild above the sea without any visible change for miles and miles. It is an evidence of the enormous distances in the Finmark that the Östhav can only be covered by a regular fast steamer in twenty-three hours, the average travelling time between Newcastle and Bergen. Eventually the little town of Vardö, with the Fortress of Vardöhus, is seen at a distance and the steamer enters a port protected by a splendid

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mole, completed in 1897 at the expense of about £139,000, and much improved since then.

Vardö, which as a town dates from the same year as Hammerfest, but which only began to increase by the middle of the nineteenth century owing to the large fisheries in East Finmark, has a climate unparalleled for its asperity. In the whole town and its vicinity there is not a single tree, and even in the middle of the summer north-westerly tempests from the Arctic Ocean may set in with great violence. In this respect Vadsö, which dates from 1833, is considerably better situated, and has a climate far more genial than that of Vardö, just as the climate at Kirkenes, on the southern side of the Varangerfjord, marks a decided improvement to that of Vadsö. In fact, there is no finer district in the whole of Finmark than the district of Syd (South) Varanger, in which, since 1907, the export town of Kirkenes has grown up with an industrial population chiefly dependent upon the activity in connection with large iron ore mines in the immediate vicinity. Here is fertile soil ; here are flowers and grass and fine birch woods. In pre-war days it was a favourite week-end trip for people at Kirkenes to go to Russia on a Saturday afternoon and return on Sunday night. The charm of this trip was the stay at the Greek-Catholic Chapel at Boris Gleb, where the hospitality of the Russian pope, not perhaps altogether disinterested, displayed itself in unobtrusive fashion. The author of the present work had an

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opportunity of enjoying this hospitality in the summer of 1916, and a lady friend who visited Boris Gleb in the summer of 1925—the visit being the final link of a splendidly arranged North Norway-Finmark touring trip—tells us that Boris Gleb is what it used to be: a secluded sanctuary in the depth of silent nature. The only difference is that people no longer go from Norway to Russia, but from Norway to Finland for a week-end trip, as owing to the frontier regulations necessitated by the establishment of the new Finnish State, Norway, in 1920, got Finland for her neighbour instead of Russia. It is a consequence, although but “one of the minor consequences” of the Great War.

Here we find ourselves on the outskirts of Norway, after having roughly outlined the country by sea and land. We have been obliged to keep ourselves within the confines of a limited description, but notwithstanding this we hope to have dissipated some popular misconceptions among foreigners as to the conditions of this country. It now remains to show, in a closing chapter, how nature, so full of striking contrasts, has appealed to the mind of the nation, and found its expression in literature as well as in music and the plastic arts.



Photo

HAMMERFEST

The most northerly town in Europe or, indeed, in the world, Hammerfest was the first to be lit by electricity without the intermediate step of coal gas.

CHAPTER XI

LITERATURE & ART

THE literature and art of a country are quite naturally always intimately associated with its general history. So far as Norway is concerned, this means that just as the history of the country is sharply divided into two parts—the Saga period and Modern Norway—separated from one another by the “Dark Centuries,” so literature is likewise divided into two parts—the ancient and the modern—separated from one another by a practically barren age of several centuries.

As regards music, decorative art, and architecture the same division exists. The culture in which these forms of art found their natural expression was deeply interwoven with the culture of the Middle Ages, such as it developed on the basis of the concentrating influence of the Catholic Church. The decline and fall of this culture, as we pointed out in the second chapter of this book, coincides with the decline and fall of Norway herself. It, therefore, quite naturally only revived in the nineteenth century, when the national spirit of the Norwegians again made them realize their mission in contemporary Europe. In literature, music, and decorative art

Literature & Art

—everywhere we meet the same revelation of the national resurrection.

LITERATURE ANCIENT AND MODERN

The ancient literature of Norway is written in the old Norse language, which bears the same relation to modern Norwegian, as Anglo-Saxon does to modern English. Accordingly, its treasures are only accessible to the great public through translations, and within recent years a systematic work, which will cover a number of years, has been initiated for the purpose of introducing to the public the impressive world of fiction of the old Norse literature.

Without going into details we can say that this literature, poetry as well as prose, reveals a remarkably high standard, a serene view of life, and, above all, a manly self-reliance engendered by the nature of the country which has justly been described as more apt to develop the spirit of individual independence than the corporate feeling of an organized society. It need hardly be said that this literature formed, as it was in "an age of axes, an age of swords," is pervaded by a remarkable fighting spirit; but at the same time it is imbued with an amount of good humour which adds to its value from a literary as well as from a human point of view. But this is not all; the Saga literature both in poetry and in prose abounds in characteristic sayings, maxims, and aphorisms, many of which are household words

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in Norway to-day, and which reveal an intimate acquaintance with man and nature.

The literature in the old Norse language came to an end in the beginning of the fourteenth century, simultaneously with the national decline mentioned above. During the subsequent two hundred years Danish established itself as the official language of Norway, and when the literary revival again set in its early specimens quite naturally appeared in that language. But notwithstanding this there continued to exist in Norway a number of dialects, akin to the ancient language, in which was preserved from generation to generation a precious treasury of songs, ballads, and folk-tales which began to be revealed to the nation only towards the middle of the nineteenth century.

In the meantime, as early as the eighteenth century, a literature began to develop, which, although written in Danish, was of an unmistakably Norwegian character. The pioneer and central figure of this literature, to whom the Norwegian and the Danish nations are indebted to an equal degree, is Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754), whom, in a special pamphlet, we have described as "the greatest playwright, the first critical historian, the most broad-minded moralist and philosopher of two nations . . . a man who revolutionized the conception of life in two kingdoms, and paved the way for the intellectual and political liberty of the future."

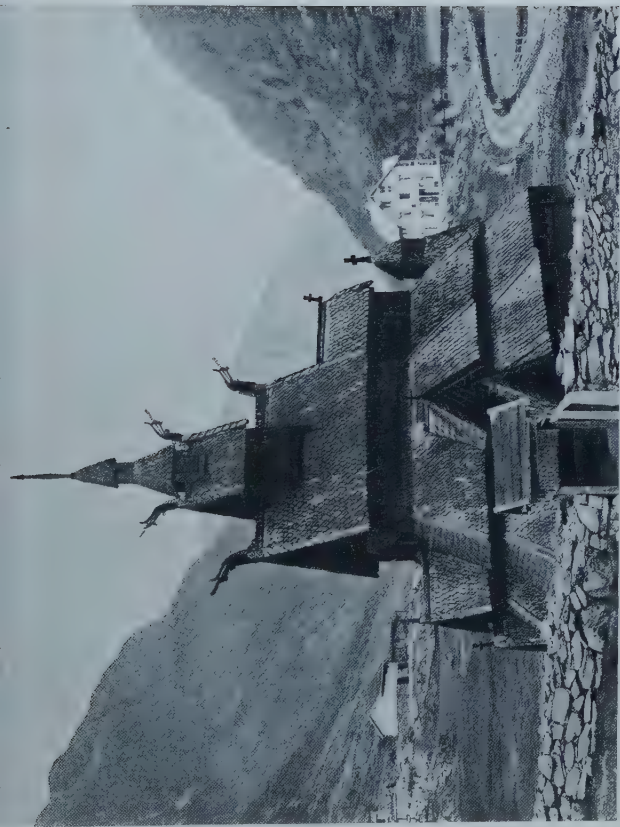
The literary and cultural influence of this

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remarkable genius, whom Sir Edmund Gosse has described as being "next to Voltaire the first writer in Europe in two generations," constitutes the introductory chapter of modern Norwegian literature as well as that of modern Danish. Yet it will easily be understood that a modern Norwegian literature could only arise after the national resurrection in 1814. This revival took place in the thirties of last century, when there came to the front a generation of young men, born and educated in Norway, and inspired by her best traditions.

Space does not allow us to enter upon any details in connection with this subject which covers, in fact, the history of Norwegian literature within the last hundred years. Those who wish for further information on this interesting subject may be referred to an able work by two Norwegians, Messrs. I. Gröndahl and O. Raknes, published in English some years ago under the title, *Chapters in Norwegian Literature*, and described as "being the substance of public lectures given at the University College, London, during the sessions 1918-1922."

It may be sufficient to state that the pioneers of the national literature of Norway, in the nineteenth century, were Henrik Wergeland (1808-1845), in many ways remarkably akin to Byron and Shelley; and Johan Sebastian Welhaven (1807-1873), who reminds one of Wordsworth. The most famous representatives of Norwegian literature in the subsequent generations was



Photo

Witke

THE BORGUND STAVE (WOODEN) CHURCH

Situated in West Norway, this church is one of the finest of its kind. It dates from the twelfth century and has been restored with the utmost care.

Literature & Art

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910), whose international fames are based upon their dramatic works. To the same age belong the fine novelists, Jonas Lie (1833-1908) and Alexander Kielland (1849-1906), both of whom have had several of their works translated into English. Knut Hamsun (b. 1859) and Madame Sigrid Undset (b. 1882), who have become widely known to the English-speaking world by their novels. The chief lyric poets of to-day are Herman Wildenvey (b. 1885) and Olaf Bull (b. 1882).

This list, which is far from being complete, does not go outside the circle of the *riksmaal* authors (authors writing in the "language of the realm"). This language in which, by the way, are being published more than seven-eighths of all the newspapers, magazines, and periodicals of the country, is the language in which within the last hundred or more years the genius of the Norwegian nation has revealed itself in the most brilliant fashion and achieved the greatest results.

Yet the *landsmaal* (country language) literature, and the movement connected with it, should not be ignored by anyone who wishes to study modern Norway. The *landsmaal* is primarily the work of a man of genius, Ivar Aasen (1813-1896), who, in the latter half of the forties, subjected the Norwegian dialects to scientific analysis and treatment. He was the first to prove that these dialects were not, as many had

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previously supposed them to be, corrupt variants of the educated language, but direct variants of the old Norse, possessing a unity so perfect that they might even form the basis of a literary language. Accordingly, he planned the formation of such a language and carried out his scheme with great ability. This was the genesis of the *landsmaal*, which, in the seventies, became one of the items on the Liberal Party programme, while, in 1885, it was raised to an official language by a formal decision of the Storting, based upon the principle of the juxtaposition of the *landsmaal* and the *riksmaal*. Since then the language movement in Norway has become a source of bitter controversy, and is likely to remain a crucial political question for many years to come, while at the same time the movement has met with a minimum of sympathy abroad. Without entering into details upon this subject on which Mr. G. Gathorne Hardy has a very instructive chapter in his book, *Norway* (Modern World Series, London, 1925), it may be sufficient to state that from a literary point of view the *landsmaal*, in the course of the last two or three generations has only produced two first-rate masters of poetry and prose. One is A. O. Vinje (1818-1870), the author among other works of a little volume written in English and published at Edinburgh in 1863 under the title, *A Norseman's View of Britain and the British*, which attracted general notice at the time, and may be read with interest by Englishmen to-day. The

Music

other is Arne Garborg, whom we have already mentioned as the poet of the Jæren. The most accomplished *landsmaal* author is Olav Duun (b. 1876), whose novels remind one of Thomas Hardy's Wessex novels.

There has for a number of years been a remarkable tendency both in the *riksmaal* and in the *landsmaal* to develop a typical local literature dealing with district life and views, inspired by district nature and written in either of the "official normals of language," but always more or less coloured by dialect. It is a movement which is particularly interesting from a *riksmaal* point of view by the impetus it gives to its growth in a constantly more national direction.

MUSIC

The enjoyment of music seems to be of ancient standing in Norway, but owing to the particular historical development of the nation it only revealed itself comparatively late as a creative art. As a consequence the history of Norwegian music is of a rather primitive character down to the middle of the nineteenth century. It is true that even before 1814 there was an active musical life, especially at Christiania, Bergen, and Trondhjem, where a number of amateurs practised classic music of German, French, or Italian origin ; but, as it has justly been pointed out, these amateurs thereby were not able to call forth to

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a creative life the intense love of music which is one of the chief characteristics of the Norwegian nation. It only revealed itself when the musical self-confidence had been awakened, and the rich treasures of Norwegian folk music, song, dances, and sacred tunes had begun to be collected. The honour of having made the nation alive to the beauty of her music belongs to the remarkable violinist and composer, Ole Bull (1810–1880), a man of world-wide fame, whose extensive concert tours over Europe and America were an impressive propaganda for Norwegian music. The honour of having collected the Norwegian folk music is due to L. M. Lindeman (1812–1887). These two men are the pioneers of Norwegian music in the nineteenth century, whose work paved the way for the famous composers, Halfdan Kjerulf (1815–1868), an exquisite lyric mind; Rikard Nordraak (1842–1866), the composer of the national anthem of Norway; Edvard Grieg (1843–1907), in whose works the typical spirit of Norwegian music has been revealed most intimately to the world, and, finally, Johan Svendsen (1840–1911), whose symphonies and rhapsodies strike the listener by their unmistakable Norwegian character.

The greatest Norwegian composer, of late times, is Christian Sinding (b. 1856), whose songs and romances enjoy a reputation which make them appear constantly on concert programmes, while at the same time he has won international fame by his symphonies. A number of other



Photo

Everet-Wilse

A "MOUNTAIN" LAPP MOTHER AND HER INFANT

The cradle in which the baby is lying is known as Komse, and may be hung up anywhere.

Painting & Sculpture

gifted composers might be named, belonging to the older as well as to the younger generation, but the limited space at our disposal admits of only this very brief survey.

Generally speaking, we may say that the musical traditions of the larger towns have been kept well alive within the last generations through a number of institutions who have done excellent work in the way of keeping musical life in a flourishing condition. Yet there is one thing wanting. Norway is not possessed of a national opera ; but fortunately no one doubts that it is sure to come one day.

PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

One of the most remarkable artistic outcomes of the revival of the national spirit in 1814 was the way in which it revealed itself through the medium of painting. It is true that for nearly half a century the artistic and economic conditions ruling in Norway at the time compelled Norwegian painters to a life of exile, as it were ; but they did not thereby forget their distant fatherland. It may rather be said that the impressions of Norwegian life and nature which they carried with them abroad were intensified by the very distance, and made them create works of art which have stood the test of time, and some of which are still considered unrivalled in Norwegian painting.

The pioneer in Norway of this noble art is

Painting & Sculpture

Johan C. Dahl (1788–1857), who was born at Bergen and died at Dresden. In the opinion of experts Dahl still ranks as the greatest master of Norwegian landscape painting, his mastery being as perfect in the depiction of the beauty of the fjord and of the valley in all their summer glory as of the rugged grandeur of the highlands. Dahl, who is splendidly represented in the National Gallery at Oslo, had a number of pupils, among whom only one, Thomas Fearnley (1802–1842), was his equal. His masterpiece, “Labro Waterfall” (National Gallery), painted during a long stay in England, is justly regarded as one of the gems of the Gallery.

Dusseldorf became the natural centre of the next generation of Norwegian painters, among whom Adolf Tidemand (1814–1879) and Hans Gude (1825–1903)—both strikingly represented in the National Gallery—are the most famous. It is of particular interest to English visitors at the National Gallery that Gude, on realizing that the Dusseldorf influence might jeopardize his art, resolutely left Germany for England in 1862, and settled in Wales, where he joined the English open-air painters during a stay of two years. In the course of the sixties Dusseldorf more and more ceased to be the artistic centre of Norwegian painters, and in the beginning of the seventies it was transferred to Munich, where it remained for about ten years. Subsequently Paris came to the front in 1880, an event which initiates a perfectly new chapter in Norwegian painting. The

Painting & Sculpture

ideals of German romanticism were thereby shelved, and instead rose the ideals of French art with its claim for truth and reality. But this is not all. The victory of French naturalism in the Norwegian art of painting also marks the end of the enforced exodus of Norwegian painters, and the beginning of an age with better conditions for them, both from an artistic and an economic point of view.

The three most striking personalities within the remarkably gifted generation of painters which came to the front in the eighties were Frits Thaulow (1847-1905), Christian Krohg (1852-1925), and Erik Werenskiold (b. 1855). Besides these painters who are represented in the National Gallery by a number of fine pictures, exhibiting their particular gifts as artists, may also be mentioned Gerhard Munthe, b. 186, an excellent landscape painter, who has won a reputation as a master in decorative art, chiefly displayed in exquisite decorations of the Haakon's Hall at Bergen.

Undoubtedly the greatest genius among Norwegian painters belonging to a later generation is Edvard Munch (b. 1865), represented in the National Gallery by a number of pictures of fascinating originality, as well as in the University Festival Hall by paintings, which are justly reckoned among the sights of Oslo. Outside the capital should be mentioned the Bergen Picture Gallery and the private gallery known as RASMUS

Painting & Sculpture

MEYER'S Collection which both contain exquisite specimens of modern Norwegian painting.

Unlike the art of painting, with its rich development during the last hundred years, the art of sculpture in Norway had a slower and more unnoticed growth, notwithstanding national traditions associated with peasant sculptors of former ages. These reminiscences of ancient sculpture in Norway can be studied nowhere better than at Trondhjem, where numerous portrait-like heads and masks found in the Cathedral stand out as evidences of the fact that the Gothic style, in Norway as well, has produced works of great artistic value. A number of statues on the west front of the Trondhjem Cathedral affords interesting specimens of thirteenth-century sculpture, but the next six hundred years practically constitute a blank in this exclusive art.

In the nineteenth century sculpture revived as a creative art in Norway, and a number of sculptors, who have produced works of great artistic value, came to the front, among them Stephan Sinding (1846-1923), whose mighty work, "Barbarian Mother carrying her dead Son from the Battlefield" (National Gallery), is justly considered one of the most impressive specimens of modern Norwegian sculpture. But they are all eclipsed by the solitary genius of Gustav Vigeland (b. 1869), in whom artistic imagination and mastery of the form are to a rare degree

Architecture

coupled with an exuberant fecundity of ideas and an untiring energy in execution. Accordingly, he has in the course of time succeeded in producing a number of works, many of which are in the National Gallery, while others can be studied in the Trondhjem Cathedral.

ARCHITECTURE, ECCLESIASTICAL AND SECULAR

The history of architecture in Norway, as we are able to survey it from our present vantage ground, covers a period of about 900 years. This means that its beginning coincides with the introduction of Christianity, no traces being left of any buildings dating from the heathen age.

As might be expected in a country so abundantly supplied with wood as Norway, churches as well as houses were all built of that material. One of the finest specimens of this kind of church, generally known as "stav-kirker" (stave-churches), is to be seen at Bygdøy at the Folk Museum, to which we have already made reference, and where also may be conveniently studied a number of secular buildings illustrating the development of architecture in Norway. Generally speaking, we may say that for hundreds of years wood continued to be the only material used for ordinary building purposes, whereas at an early period churches used to be built of stone. In

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fact, the art of building in stone has been introduced in Norway by Anglo-Saxon and Irish clergymen whom our missionary kings brought with them from the British Isles, and who assisted them as experts in the building of the earliest churches.

Gradually the art of architecture developed on a more extensive scale, and from the end of the eleventh century two main types established themselves—one prevailing in East and South Norway, the other in West and North Norway. The chief characteristics of the former type which can most conveniently be studied in the church of Gamlez Aker, one of the parish churches of Oslo, is a square central tower and a semi-circular choir, while the church itself is divided into three naves by round columns. The chief characteristics of the latter type is the one-naved church with a rectangular choir, the tower placed on the west end. To this type of church belongs the ancient St. Mary's Church at Bergen, to which we have already made a reference, the only difference being that instead of one tower it has two on the west end of the building. Subsequently the Gothic style made its appearance in Norway, where it had its earliest and most sublime monument in the Trondhjem Cathedral, and from the middle of the thirteenth century this style gradually spread over the country, influenced by the English Gothic, as it can chiefly be studied in the Cathedral of Stavanger. Apart from the churches there are few monumental

Architecture

buildings in Norway, among which the Haakon's Hall and the Fortress of Akershus are the most prominent.

After the introduction of the Reformation stave churches cease to be built, and the churches dating from the subsequent centuries are mostly built in the style in vogue in Contemporary Europe, the rococo style being especially represented. During the same centuries a number of secular buildings were constructed, such as the Stiftsgaard at Trondhjem and the Eidsvold Building, some forty miles to north of Oslo, the birthplace of Norwegian Constitution of 1814.

The most important works of modern architecture in Norway date from the first half of the nineteenth century. They are represented at Oslo by such buildings as the Royal Palace and the University, and were built by foreign architects. Subsequently a generation of Norwegian architects grew up; but as they all had studied in Germany, German influence is, of course, very evident in their buildings.

Of late times English influence as well as influence from Sweden and Denmark has come more to the front in Norwegian architecture, whereby a period of better taste has been initiated, bearing promise for the future.

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